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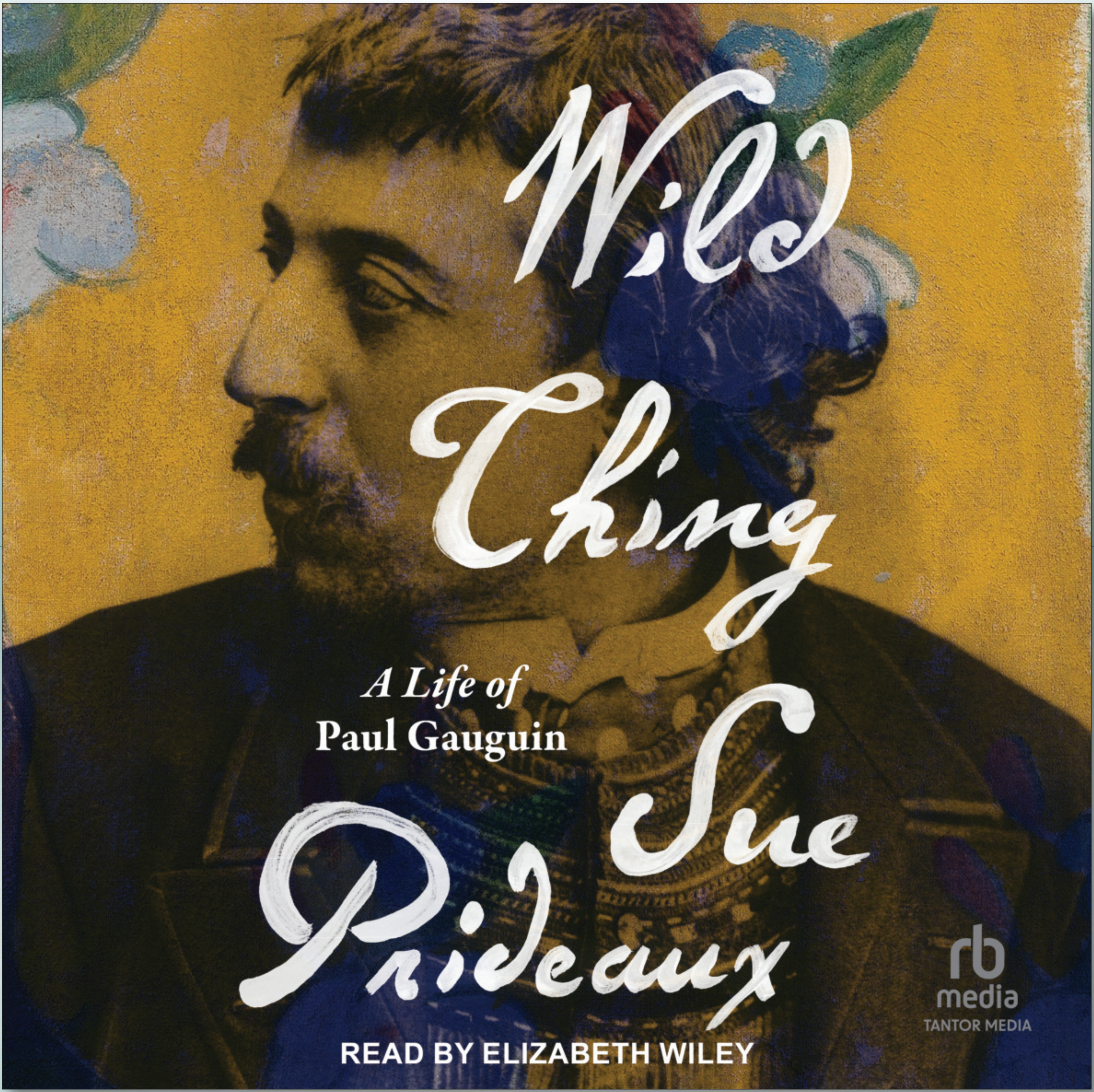
Wild Thing
A Life of
Paul Gauguin
Sue Prideaux
rb media
TANTOR MEDIA
READ BY ELIZABETH WILEY

August/September 2025
USA $6.00/Canada $8.00

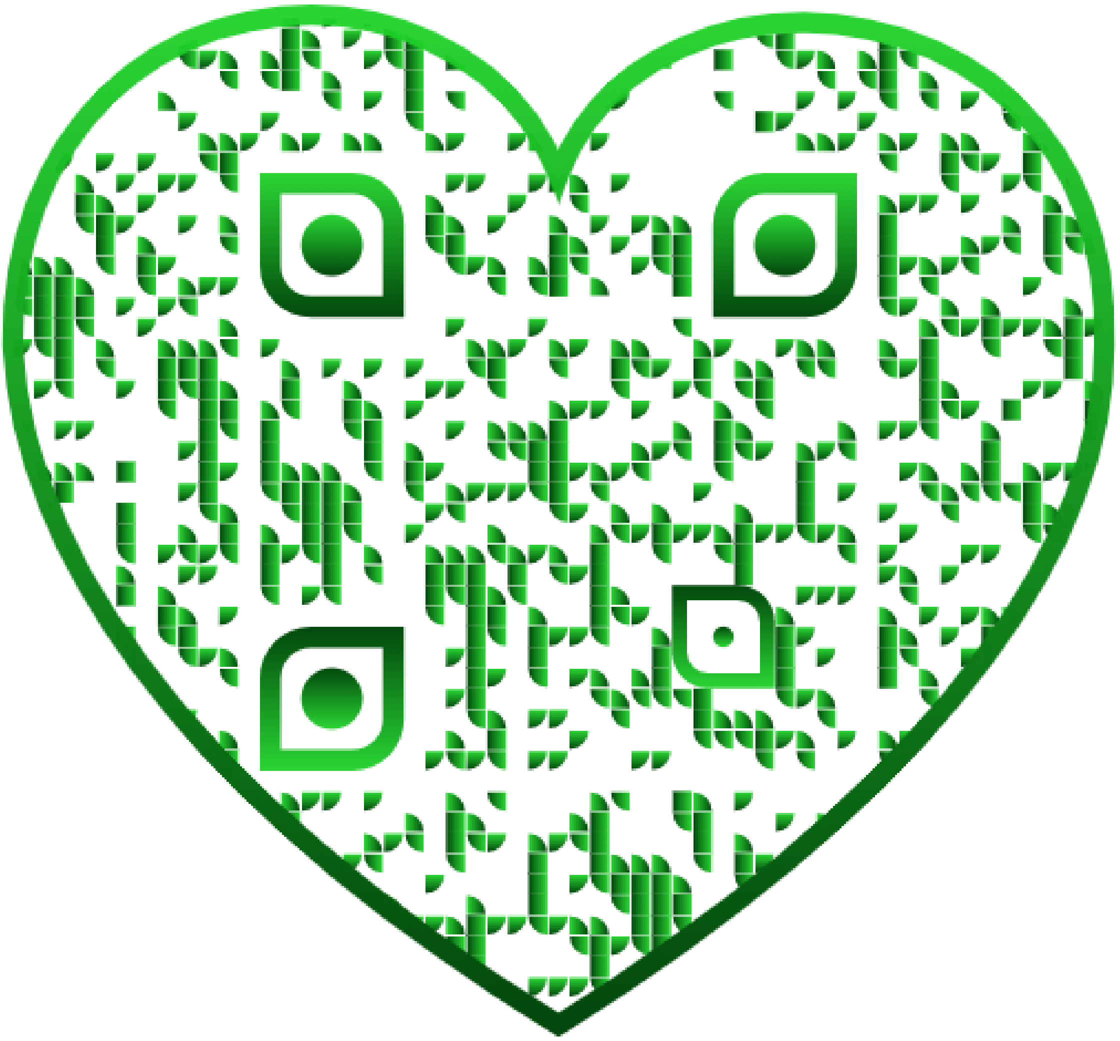

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Illustration: Jada Fitch

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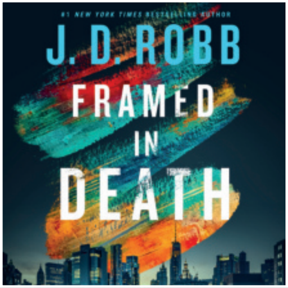
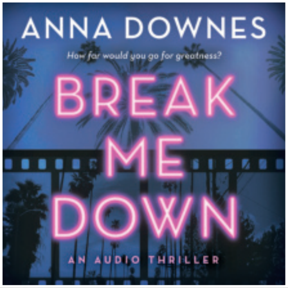
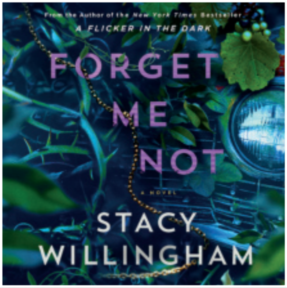

J. D. ROBB
FRAMED IN DEATH

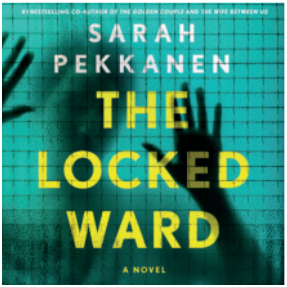
READ BY SUSAN ERICKSEN


ANNA DOWNES
How far would you go for greatness?
BREAK ME DOWN
AN AUDIO THRILLER

READ BY A FULL CAST


A FLICKER IN THE DARK
FORGET ME NOT
STACY WILLINGHAM

READ BY KARISSA VACKER & HELEN LASER


SARAH PEKKANEN
THE LOCKED WARD
A NOVEL

READ BY JANUARY LaVOY

"A SCREAM."
CHUCK TINGLE
LUCKY DAY
ALL BETS ARE OFF

READ BY MARA WILSON

ANGELINE BOULLEY
SISTERS IN THE WIND

READ BY ISABELLA STAR LaBLANC

NATALIE BABBITT
Tuck Everlasting
CELEBRATING 50 YEARS
Read by ALEXIS BLEDEL

READ BY ALEXIS BLEDEL

Rebecca Ross
A Novel
Wild Reverence

READ BY HANNAH VAN DER WESTHUYEN & GEORGE WEIGHTMAN

L.A. THEATRE WORKS LATW
SUSAN A. LOEWENBERG, PRODUCING DIRECTOR

Kenichi Zenimura – known as "Zeni" – loved baseball. As a young man in the 1920s he developed a Nisei baseball league in Fresno, California, and later organized barnstorming tours that brought the likes of Babe Ruth to the West Coast and Japan. And despite being sent to a Japanese-American internment camp in Arizona during World War II, he knew that somehow, baseball would be the key to improving the lives of his fellow detainees.

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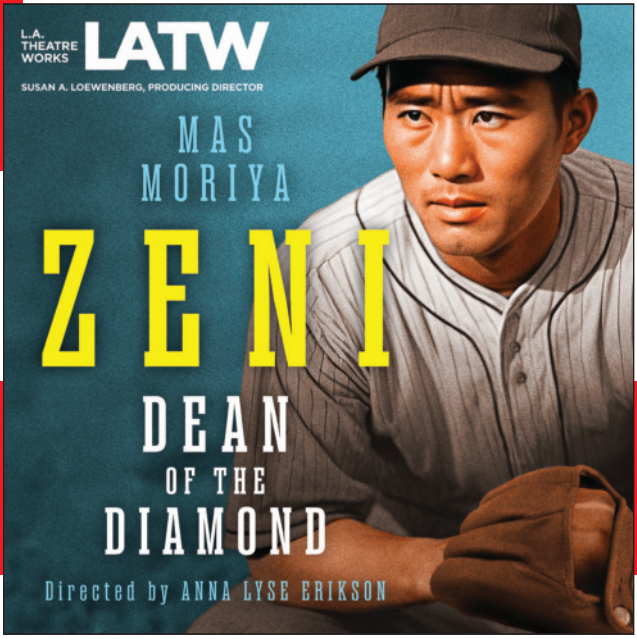
L.A. THEATRE WORKS LATW
SUSAN A. LOEWENBERG, PRODUCING DIRECTOR
MAS MORIYA
ZENI
DEAN OF THE DIAMOND
Directed by ANNA LYSE ERIKSON

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Vol. 34, No. 2
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AudioFile's Mission

AudioFile reviews unabridged audiobooks, original audio programs, commentary and dramatizations in the spoken-word format. Our focus is the audio presentation, not critique of the written material.

AudioFile reviewers are listeners in the information, education, and performance fields. All reviews are signed.

AudioFile awards Earphones to truly exceptional presentations that excel in all the following criteria:

- Narrative voice and style
- Vocal characterizations
- Appropriateness for the audio format
- Enhancement of the text

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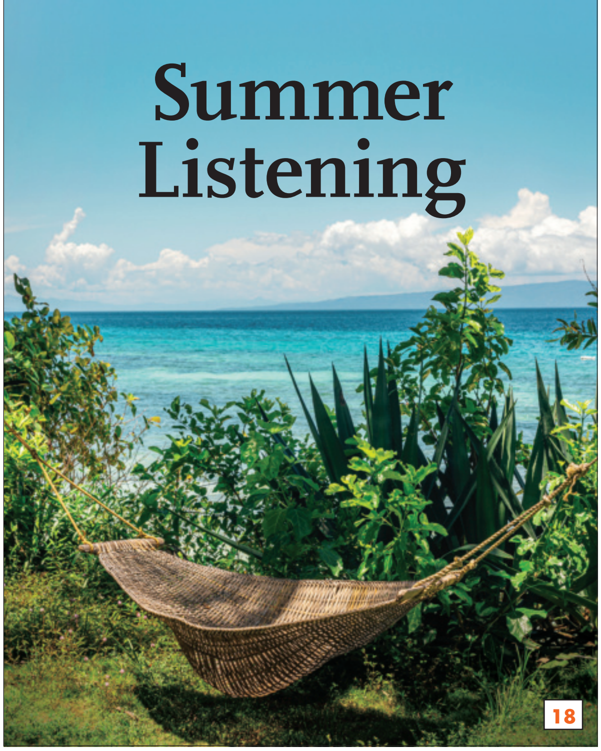
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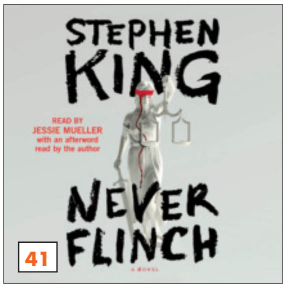
STEPHEN KING
READ BY JESSIE MUELLER with an afterword read by the author
NEVER FLINCH
A NOVEL

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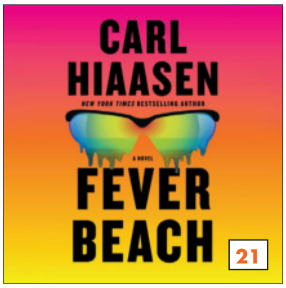
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A NOVEL
FEVER BEACH

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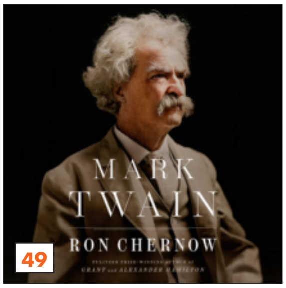
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Vikas Adam photo by Sergio Garcia

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Where Will Listening Take You?

▶ What is it about the summer season that makes me wonder about all the places where listeners enjoy their audiobooks? Perhaps it is the lazy summer days that give us more time to immerse ourselves in favorite audiobooks. "Beach Reads" are a long-standing tradition for vacations—whether they are actually read at the beach, in the mountains, or even on an evening stroll in the summer light. Sometimes it's more the concept of having more time than the actual opportunity—but I always have those TBR audiobooks queued and ready. We chose the image of a hammock by the beach for the opening of our reviews section on page 18 as inspiration, and also as a reminder of how short and sweet summertime is—grab those listening opportunities!

If you need ideas and a delightful bit of inspiration for tackling a really long audiobook you've been wanting to take on—check out what *AudioFile* contributing editor Alan Minskoff did during the 44 hours of listening to Ron Chernow's *Mark Twain*: gardening, groceries, laundry, sports. Alan's entertaining chronicle on page 70 also muses on what Twain would have thought of these 21st-century activities. On the *other* side of the mic, you can also watch Twain narrator Jason Culp talk about recording the Twain biography in our Behind the Mic video on *AudioFile*'s YouTube channel. Jason spent even more hours of preparation and recording to achieve the finished performance—an Earphones Award winner.

This issue we've given special love to independent publishers and include an Indie Spotlight feature with Golden Voice Kate Reading and author Mark Binder (pen name Izzy Abrahmson) on page 30. *The Council of Wise Women* audiobook won a 2025 Gold Award for Fiction from IBPA (Independent Book Publishers Association). In our Independent Authors and Publishers special advertising section (pages 11 to 17) listeners can find thrillers, memoirs, historical fiction, adventure, and epic fantasy. We're so pleased to showcase the grassroots efforts of these authors and publishers who add vitality and variety to today's audio publishing offerings.

Enjoy this summer's audiobooks—wherever you are listening!

Robin Whitten

Robin Whitten
Editor and Founder

Photo by Kevin Brusie

Inside Track

AudioFile's YouTube channel
Youtube.com/@audiofilemagazine

Behind the Mic pocast
audiofilemagazine.com/podcast

Articles
audiofilemagazine.com/articles

Contributors

Michele Cobb
Leslie Fine
Tom Walken
Alan Minskoff
Jo Reed

Michele Cobb
Michele Cobb ("Behind the Mic: *Soundtrack*, page 60) is such a fan of audiobooks that she wears many hats in the industry, including Publisher of *AudioFile* Magazine. She regularly travels around the globe talking about the growth of the format. Her favorite audiobook is *Blindness* by Jose Saramago, read by Jonathan Davis.

Leslie Fine
For 31 years, Leslie Fine (Elizabeth Wiley profile, page 46) has shared her enthusiasm for literature with the students in her high school English classes. After school hours, she can be found doing something creative or outdoorsy—often with family, and other times while listening to audiobooks. She is a longtime reviewer for *AudioFile*.

Alan Minskoff
Reviewer Alan Minskoff ("Spending 44 Hours with *Mark Twain*," page 70) listens to audiobooks as he commutes from his house in Boise to his work at the College of Idaho in Caldwell, and when he walks his flat-coated retrievers along the Boise River or on the Greenbelt. He's also the author of the book *The Idaho Traveler*. In addition to reviewing, Alan is a regular contributor to *AudioFile*'s podcast Behind the Mic.

Jo Reed
AudioFile's podcast host Jo Reed ("Behind the Mic: Golden Voice Vikas Adam," page 24) is a compulsive listener of audiobooks. She was the program director of the book and theater channel on XM Satellite Radio, where she created, produced, and hosted "This Is Audible" and "Writers on Writing." She also created, produced, and hosted the literary show "On the Margin" for WPFW, where it ran for 18 years.

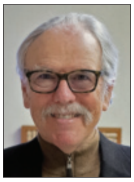
Tom Walken
Contributing Editor Tom Walken ("Learning by Ear," Page 52) began writing for *AudioFile* in 1995 when he was in psychology and managing a mental health practice. He says his nonfiction listening helps his executive coaching practice and makes his outdoor walks more stimulating. His free time is spent with music, cooking, family, and fixing things.

Want to be part of *AudioFile*'s review team?

While we work with more than 100 reviewers, we are always interested in new reviewers. We value fresh opinions across all genres. If you are a very active listener, have writing experience, and are interested in discussing the audiobook performance in 125 words or less—you are welcome to apply to editor Robin Whitten, **robin@audiofilemagazine.com**.

Alan Minskoff photo by Diane Ronayne, Michele Cobb photo by Max Flatow, Jo Reed photo by John Bool

Reviewers


A.D.M.

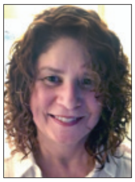
A.K.R.

A.L.C.

A.A.H.	Ash Holland, *Bookshop Owner*, ME
A.B.	Anna Broome, *Audiophile*, ME
A.C.S.	Aurelia C. Scott, *Writer*, ME
A.D.M.	Alan Minskoff, *Educator*, ID
A.K.R.	Alex Richey, *Librarian*, ME
A.L.C.	Amanda Costello, *Writer*, NE
A.L.S.M.	Amanda Murphy, *Librarian*, OH
A.M.	Ana G. Menchaca, *Librarian*, TX
B.G.	Beth Gutcheon, *Novelist*, NY

B.G.

B.P.


D.G.

B.P.	Brian Price, *Playwright/ Director*, IN
C.A.	Caitlin Augusta, *Librarian*, CT
C.A.P.	Crystal Patenaude, *Audiophile*, CT
C.F.	Catherine Fithian, *Librarian & Bookseller*, CA
D.A.W.	David A. Walton, *Writer*, PA
D.B.	Dan Bortolotti, *Writer*, ON
D.E.M.	Dale E. McGarrigle, *Writer*, ME
D.G.	Diane Gardner, *Librarian*, NY
D.J.S.	Daniel J. Siegel, *Audiophile*, PA
D.L.G.	Diana Granger, *Librarian*, WI
D.M.H.	David M. Harris, *Writer*, TN

D.J.S.

D.L.G.

D.M.H.

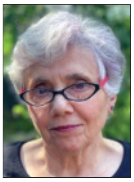
E.E.

E.E.C.

E.E.S.

E.E.	Elizabeth Ellis, *Editor*, IN
E.E.C.	Emily Connelly, *Librarian*, ME
E.E.S.	Elaine Sumner, *Librarian*, RI
E.J.F.	Elizabeth Fraser, *Calgary Public Library*, AB
E.Q.	Ellen Quint, *Writer*, NY
G.M.	Gina Monti, *Librarian*, CT
J.E.M.	Joyce E. McCarty, *Audiophile*, VA
J.E.S.	Joanne Simoneau, AudioFile, ME

E.J.F.


E.Q.

J.E.M.

J.M.D.	Jennifer M. Dowell, AudioFile, ME
J.M.M.	John M. Murray, *Audiophile*, CA
J.R.T.	Julie Thompson, *Librarian*, WA
K.D.W.	Kendra Winchester, *Writer*, SC
K.J.P.	Kate Pullen, *Writer*, Spain
K.M.P.	Katie Polley, *Librarian*, MN
L.B.F.	Leslie B. Fine, *Educator*, NY
L.M.G.	Lisa Grimaldi, *Dyer Library*, ME
L.S.	Laura Sackton, *Writer*, MA
L.T.	Lisa Taylor, *Librarian*, FL

Continued on page 71

J.M.D.

J.M.M.

L.S.

Reviewer Spotlight

Gina Monti (G.M.)

I served as a public librarian for seven years and graduated with an MLS in 2014. I now work as an engineer supporting Connecticut libraries with their software needs, and I'm still an avid audiobook listener. My most recent favorite is *When We Were Vikings* narrated by Phoebe Strole, and two of my favorite narrators are Jayne Entwistle, best known for narrating the Flavia de Luce series, and Sissy Spacek, the brilliant narrator of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Stephen Cummings (S.P.C.)

I grew up listening to stories on cassette tapes. I listened to *Gulliver's Travels* and *The Charlie Brown Halloween Special* at night, then "The Shadow" and "Inner Sanctum" radio programs. My formal introduction to the modern audiobook occurred after my mom lent me *Angela's Ashes*, which came in a box of several tapes. That's when it clicked. I've been actively listening to audiobooks for 30 years now.

Editors' Picks

ANNALEE NEWITZ
Automatic Noodle
Read by Em Grosland
In a future postwar San Francisco, a group of robots opens a noodle shop.
Macmillan Audio Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781250395627 $10.99
Release date: August 5

LOUIS SACHAR
The Magician of Tiger Castle
Read by Edoardo Ballerini, Louis Sachar
From author Sachar (*Holes*), a fantasy novel for adults about a struggling kingdom, an arranged marriage, and a magician faced with a terrible choice.
Penguin Audio Unabridged
Trade: DD ISBN 9798217074792 $25.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217075218 $95.00
Release date: August 5

LISA GARDNER
Kiss Her Goodbye
Read by Hillary Huber
Golden Voice Hillary Huber is back in this fourth Frankie Elkin adventure.
Hachette Audio Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781668645017 $31.99
Release date: August 12

CHUCK TINGLE
Lucky Day
Read by Mara Wilson
Eight million people were killed in a freakish occurrence of bad luck.
Now a former professor is investigating an unusual lucky casino.
Macmillan Audio Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781250402066 $26.99
Release date: August 12

KARIN SLAUGHTER
We Are All Guilty Here
Read by Kathleen Early
Karin Slaughter embarks on a new mystery series set in the town of North Falls.
Harper Audio Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9780063336797 $26.99
Release date: August 12

AUTOMATIC NOODLE
ANNALEE
THE MAGICIAN OF TIGER CASTLE
LOUIS SACHAR
CHUCK TINGLE
LUCKY DAY
ALL BETS OFF
Arundhati Roy
MOTHER MARY COMES TO ME
R.F. KUANG
KATABASIS
A NOVEL

KATE ELLIOTT
The Witch Roads: Witch Roads, Book 1
Read by Ella Lynch
A courier guides a prince on a dangerous journey in this first book in a new fantasy duology—the follow-up, *The Nameless Land*, arrives on audio early next year.
Tantor Media Unabridged
Trade Ed.: CD ISBN 9798228613065 $56.14 (also DD)
Release date: August 19

FANNIE FLAGG
Something to Look Forward To: Fictions
Read by Fannie Flagg
Fannie Flagg narrates her own new collection of feel-good stories.
Random House Audio Unabridged
Trade: DD ISBN 9798217159581 $22.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217160488 $76.00
Release date: August 19

R.F. KUANG
Katabasis
Read by Morag Sims, Will Watt
In this new novel from the author of *Yellowface* and *Babel*, two graduate students try to save their professor's soul.
Harper Audio Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9780063021501 $27.99
Release date: August 26

NATALIE BABBITT
Tuck Everlasting: 50th Anniversary Edition
Read by Alexis Bledel
Alexis Bledel ("The Gilmore Girls") narrates this 50th anniversary edition of the classic middle-grade novel.
Macmillan Audio Unabridged Ages 10+
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781250338594 $10.99
Release date: September 2

ARUNDHATI ROY
Mother Mary Comes to Me
Read by Arundhati Roy
Roy (*The God of Small Things*) explores her relationship with her mother in this memoir.
Simon & Schuster Audio Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781668132678 $27.29
Release date: September 2

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ANGELINE BOULLEY

Sisters in the Wind

Read by Isabella Star LaBlanc

Boulley and narrator Isabella Star LaBlanc team up once again, this time for the story of a foster teen trying to figure out her past and her future.

Macmillan Audio   Unabridged   Ages 14+
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781250411402 $26.00
Release date: September 2

MACKENZI LEE

Lady Like

Read by Moira Quirk

From the author of *A Gentleman's Guide to Vice and Virtue*, a Regency romance about two women competing for the same man who fall for each other instead.

Random House Audio   Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798217158850 $22.00
Release date: September 9

KATHERINE RUNDELL

The Poisoned King: Impossible Creatures, Book 2

Reader TBA

This sequel to *Impossible Creatures* (a Best Audiobook of 2024) finds new dangers for the magical creatures of the Archipelago.

Listening Library   Unabridged   Ages 10+
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9780593830109 $25.00
Release date: September 11

WILLIAM ALEXANDER

Sunward

Read by Lindsey Dorcus

In this sci-fi novel, an interplanetary courier must protect the AI pupils she mentors.

Simon & Schuster Audio   Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781668136249 $18.89
Release date: September 16

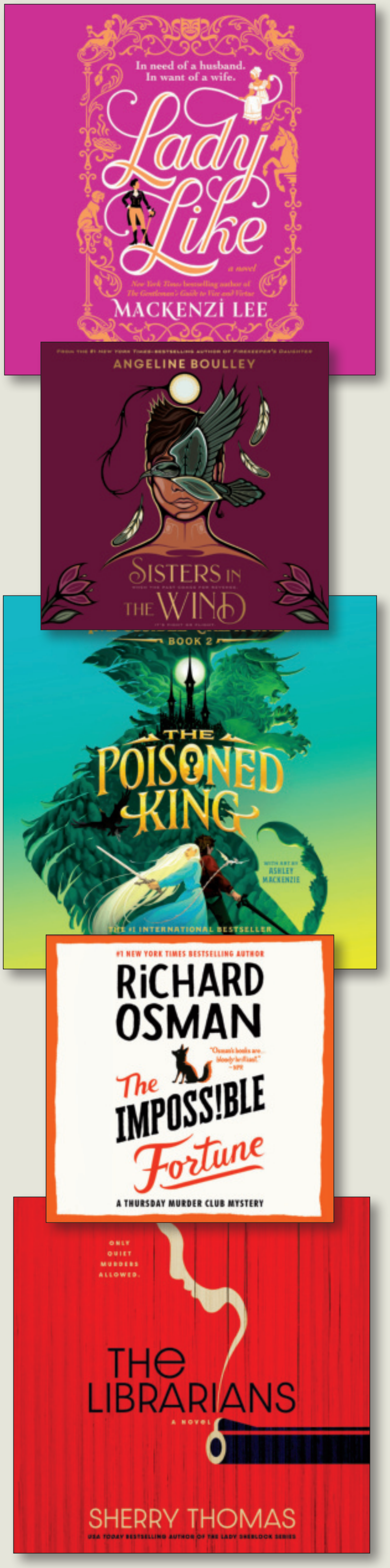
REBECCA STEAD

The Experiment

Read by Mark Sanderlin

From a Newbery Medalist—sixth grader Nathan is (secretly) an alien, but the experiment that brought him to Earth is coming to an end.

Macmillan Audio   Unabridged   Ages 8+
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781250411426 $19.99
Release date: September 16


In need of a husband. In want of a wife.
Lady Like
a novel
MACKENZI LEE
ANGELINE BOULLEY
SISTERS IN THE WIND
BOOK 2
THE POISONED KING
THE #1 INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER
#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR
RICHARD OSMAN
The IMPOSSIBLE Fortune
A THURSDAY MURDER CLUB MYSTERY
ONLY QUIET MURDERS ALLOWED.
THE LIBRARIANS
A NOVEL
SHERRY THOMAS

NAOMI NOVIK

The Summer War

Reader TBA

A young witch tries to undo the curse she placed on her brother in this new novella from fantasy favorite Novik.

Random House Audio   Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798217159246 $18.00
Release date: September 16

VERONICA ROTH

To Clutch a Razor: Curse Bearer, Book 2

Read by Helen Laser, James Fouhey, Nina Yndis, Tim Campbell

We named *Among Crows* one of our Best Audiobooks of 2024, so we're eagerly awaiting the sequel.

Macmillan Audio   Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781250403292 $19.99
Release date: September 16

RICHARD OSMAN

The Impossible Fortune: Thursday Murder Club, Book 5

Reader TBA

Talk about eagerly awaiting! Hooray for a new (and final?) meeting of the Thursday Murder Club.

Penguin Audio   Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798217081257 $25.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: ISBN 9798217081264 $95.00
Release date: September 30

ANN CLEEVES

The Killing Stones: Jimmy Perez and Willow Reeves, Book 1

Read by Kenny Blyth

Favorite detective Jimmy Perez returns, having traded Shetland for Orkney.

Macmillan Audio   Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781250403353 $26.99
Release date: September 30

SHERRY THOMAS

The Librarians

Read by Louisa Zhu

We love Sherry Thomas's Lady Sherlock series, so we're excited for this contemporary outing about a group of librarians in Texas and a game night gone wrong.

Penguin Audio   Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798217163021 $26.00
Release date: September 30

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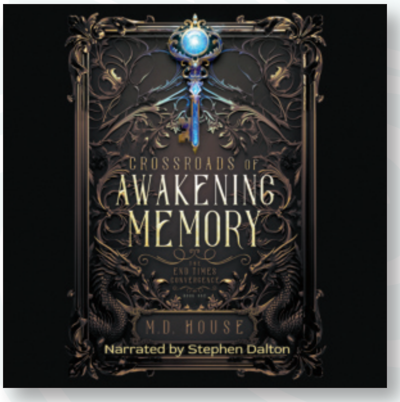
Kick Back with Audiobooks: Selections from Independent Publishers & Authors


CROSSROADS OF
AWAKENING
MEMORY
M.D. HOUSE
Narrated by Stephen Dalton

Amid a besom of chaos and doubt, young Council Guard Rain Barynd must work with members of a mysterious ancient order to piece together a growing convergence of clues long prophesied. All while trying to figure out his place in the mythical, magical madness. Only one thing is certain—he is not ready.

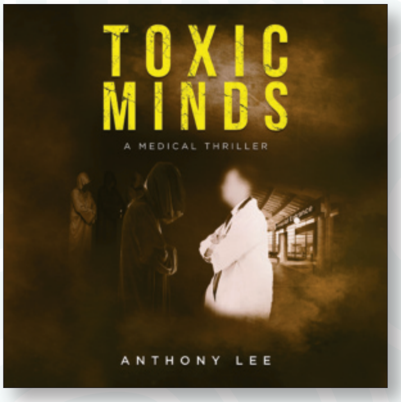
Crossroads of Awakening Memory
By M.D. House, read by Stephen Dalton
Published by M.D. HOUSE
Available Now / DD

The
Lake
Contract
a novel
by Carla J. Harrod
read by Jennifer Riker

A divorce before the marriage? That's how it felt to the younger, attractive Sydney Wyles who falls hard for the older uber rich Palm Beacher, Victor Paxton, when a prenup agreement causes friction before and after the marriage. This "War of the Roses" style dark comedy keeps you in suspense, wondering the outcome played out at their Lake Como villa, a crucial part of the contract.

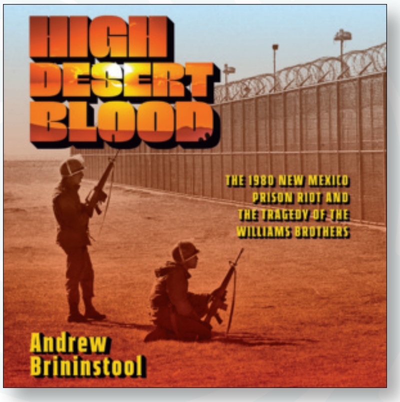
A fun Summer listen!

The Lake Contract
By Carla J. Harrod, read by Jennifer Riker
Published by PUNCH AUDIO
Available Now / DD


TOXIC
MINDS
A MEDICAL THRILLER
ANTHONY LEE

In this medical thriller, healthcare collides with disinformation. A patient dies in a suicide bomber attack. Her doctor suspects the work of a malicious cult. The only way to avenge his patient is to join the cult and destroy it from within.

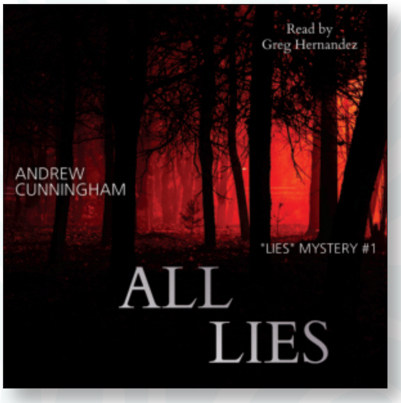
Toxic Minds
By Anthony Lee, read by Anthony Lee
Published by ANTHONY LEE
Available Now / DD


HIGH
DESERT
BLOOD
THE 1980 NEW MEXICO
PRISON RIOT AND
THE TRAGEDY OF THE
WILLIAMS BROTHERS
Andrew
Brininstool

An overconfident father's simple insurance fraud scheme unknowingly thrusts his family into the chaos of one of America's most violent prison riots. Andrew Brininstool's meticulously researched and compelling storytelling take listeners inside the Penitentiary of New Mexico, unveiling the conditions that led to the infamous and catastrophic 1980 riot which left a permanent scar on the American penal landscape.

High Desert Blood: The 1980 New Mexico Prison Riot and the Tragedy of the Williams Brothers
By Andrew Brininstool, read by Michael Puttonen
Published by POST HYPNOTIC PRESS INC.
Available July 2025 / DD

Kick Back with Audiobooks: Selections


Read by
Greg Hernandez
ANDREW
CUNNINGHAM
"LIES" MYSTERY #1
ALL
LIES

"I come from a long line of idiots."

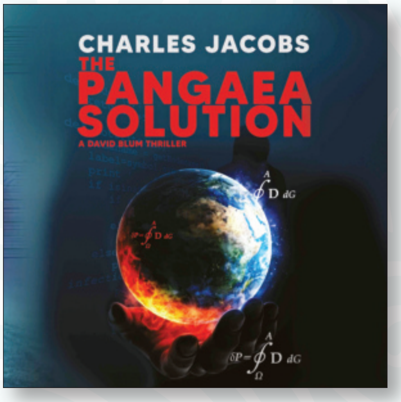
Those were the last words his father uttered to Del Honeycutt before dying. A seemingly innocent date gone tragically wrong plunges Del into a web of murder, lies, greed, and a hidden fortune dating back to a crime committed 85 years earlier by his great-grandfather.

All Lies ("Lies" Mystery Thriller Series Book 1)
By Andrew Cunningham, read by Greg Hernandez
Published by ARCNOVELS
Available Now / DD

Diamonds in Auschwitz is a poignant tale of love, resilience, and hope amid unimaginable darkness. Rachael discovers a hidden diamond ring in Auschwitz, sparking a bond with young Chaya. Interwoven is the story of Samual and Hanna in Nazi-occupied Prague—lovers whose dreams endure even as their world crumbles.

Diamonds in Auschwitz
By Meg Hamand, read by Emily Sutton-Smith
Published by RIVER GROVE BOOKS
Available Now / MP3 / $20.95

DIAMONDS
IN
AUSCHWITZ
a novel
MEG HAMAND


CHARLES JACOBS
THE
PANGAEA
SOLUTION
A DAVID BLUM THRILLER

Former FBI agent Blum uncovers a plot by a shadowy think-tank to spread a deadly virus across the globe. A final conflict in the bowels of an experimental greenhouse reveals the plot is ultimately more profound than Blum could have imagined, forcing him to question his own sense of morality.

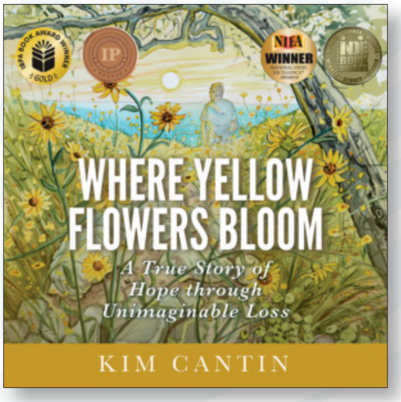
The Pangaea Solution
By Charles Jacobs, read by Dion Graham
Published by CHARLES JACOBS
Available Now / DD

IBPA & IPPY AWARD-WINNING AUDIOBOOK

A moving memoir of love, loss & resilience after the 2018 Montecito Mudslides.

Featured on NBC's Survival Mode (airs August 4, 2025).

Where Yellow Flowers Bloom: A True Story of Hope Through Unimaginable Loss
By Kim Cantin, read by Kim Cantin & Lauren Cantin, engineered by Arthur Morey
Published by PRECOCITY PRESS
Available at Audible | kimcantin.com | precocitypress.com

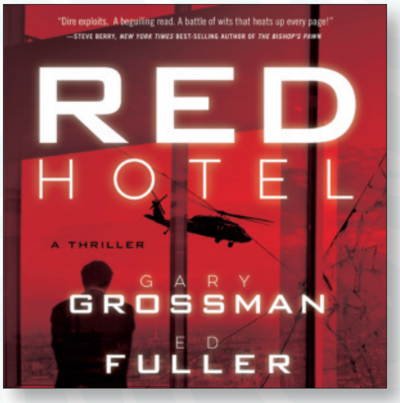

WINNER
WHERE YELLOW
FLOWERS BLOOM
A True Story of
Hope through
Unimaginable Loss
KIM CANTIN

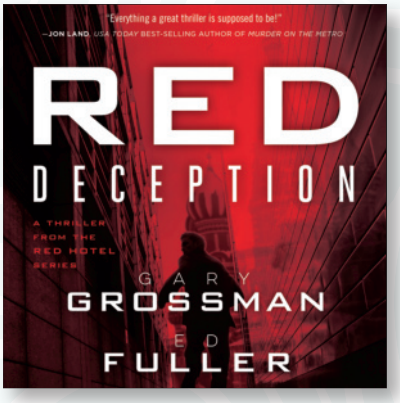
BE READY TO BE CATAPULTED INTO THE REAL WORLD OF GLOBAL INTRIGUE!

from Independent Publishers & Authors

After a deadly bombing at Tokyo's Kensington Royal Hotel, ex-Army intelligence officer turned hotel executive, Dan Reilly, pursues the assassin and uncovers a global conspiracy orchestrated by a superpower. Reilly races against time to unravel the plot against NATO's security, while questioning whether the mysterious and alluring Marnie Babbitt, can be trusted.

Red Hotel: The Red Hotel Series, Book 1
By Gary Grossman & Ed Fuller, read by P.J. Ochlan
Published by THE RED HOTEL LLC
Available at Audible / MP3-CD


"Dire exploits. A beguiling read. A battle of wits that heats up every page!"
—STEVE BERRY, NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLING AUTHOR OF THE BISHOP'S PAWN
RED
HOTEL
A THRILLER
GARY
GROSSMAN
ED
FULLER

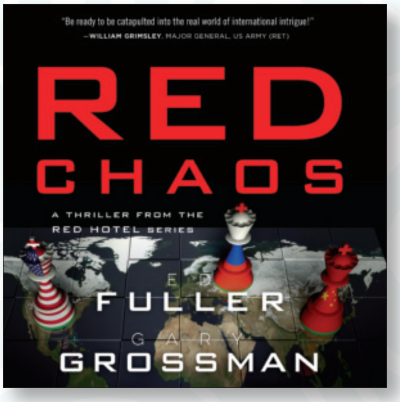

"Everything a great thriller is supposed to be!"
—JON LAND, USA TODAY BEST-SELLING AUTHOR OF MURDER ON THE METRO
RED
DECEPTION
A THRILLER FROM THE RED HOTEL SERIES
GARY
GROSSMAN
ED
FULLER

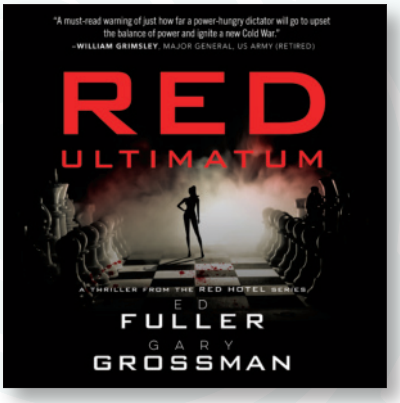
When terrorists target U.S. infrastructure using a leaked State Department report, former Army intelligence officer Dan Reilly uncovers a global, Russian-led conspiracy full of traps and traitors. Can Reilly connect the dots to a hugely explosive geopolitical plot and even save the woman who may be part of it?

Red Deception: The Red Hotel Series, Book 2
By Gary Grossman & Ed Fuller, read by P.J. Ochlan
Published by THE RED HOTEL LLC
Available at Audible

Dan Reilly is back in action in a heart-pounding thriller—the stakes can't be higher. As the Arctic ice melts, Russian President Nicolai Gorshkov seeks to control international oil routes to fund a greater Russian Empire. The clock ticks toward disaster on land and under the sea with Reilly at his best.

Red Chaos: The Red Hotel Series, Book 3
By Ed Fuller & Gary Grossman, read by P.J. Ochlan
Published by THE RED HOTEL LLC
Available at Audible


"Be ready to be catapulted into the real world of international intrigue!"
—WILLIAM GRIMSLEY, MAJOR GENERAL, US ARMY (RET)
RED
CHAOS
A THRILLER FROM THE RED HOTEL SERIES
ED
FULLER
GARY
GROSSMAN


"A must-read warning of just how far a power-hungry dictator will go to upset the balance of power and ignite a new Cold War."
—WILLIAM GRIMSLEY, MAJOR GENERAL, US ARMY (RETIRED)
RED
ULTIMATUM
A THRILLER FROM THE RED HOTEL SERIES
ED
FULLER
GARY
GROSSMAN

A former U.S. president's plane crashes, Cairo is attacked, and the Secretary of State is kidnapped. As Russia's President Gorshkov pushes toward Soviet revival, China resists, and Dan Reilly races to unravel a global web of chaos, facing assassins, sleeper spies, and a daring rescue in the Colombian jungle.

Red Ultimatum: The Red Hotel Series, Book 4
By Ed Fuller & Gary Grossman, read by P.J. Ochlan
Published by THE RED HOTEL LLC
Available at Audible

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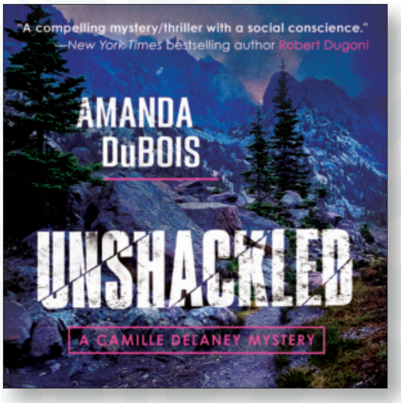

"A compelling mystery/thriller with a social conscience."
—New York Times bestselling author Robert Dugoni
AMANDA DuBOIS
UNSHACKLED
A CAMILLE DELANEY MYSTERY

Award-winning author DuBois returns with a new installment in the Camille Delaney Mystery series, this time taking on injustice in the prison system. A twisty tale of deceit, mistaken identity, and finding family in unexpected places.

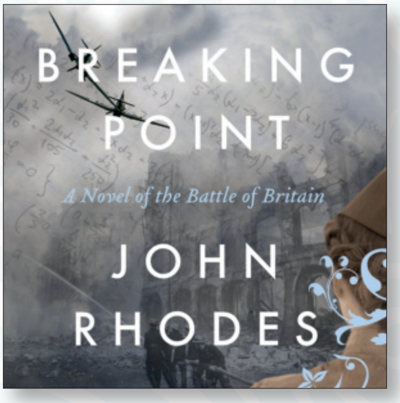
"A compelling mystery/thriller with a social conscience."
—*New York Times* bestselling author Robert Dugoni

Unshackled: A Camille Delaney Mystery
By Amanda DuBois, read by Liz Fodor
Published by FLASHPOINT
Available Now / DD / $21.99

Ravi Agrawal, former chief CNN India correspondent, explores the transformative impact of smartphones and internet in India. The shift to smartphones has revolutionized daily life, disrupting traditions, transforming business, and shifting the economy from cash to credit. The internet empowers, but also brings challenges: pornography, government control, and a rise in violence and terrorism.

India Connected: How the Smartphone is Transforming the World's Largest Democracy
By Ravi Agrawal, read by TBA
Published by POST HYPNOTIC PRESS INC.
Available in July 2025 / DD

RAVI AGRAWAL
"Quite simply, the best book about India today."
FAREED ZAKARIA
INDIA CONNECTED
How the Smartphone Is Transforming the World's Largest Democracy


BREAKING POINT
A Novel of the Battle of Britain
JOHN RHODES

1940, World War II. The Nazis have crushed Europe, and Hitler launches a massive aerial assault with the Luftwaffe against the heavily outnumbered British RAF. The fate of civilization teeters in the balance.

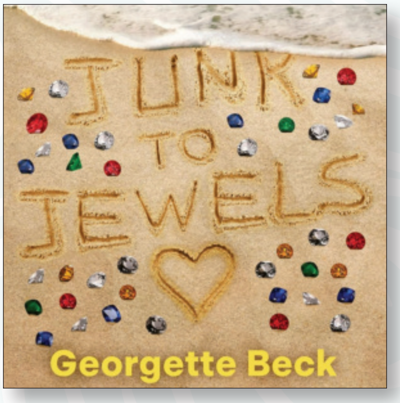
Breaking Point: A Novel of the Battle of Britain
By John Rhodes, read by Evie Butcher
Published by ROUNDEL HOUSE
Available Now / DD

This enchanting audiobook brings together all three volumes of the *Tails of the Travelling Bag*. Jerri gerbil and his companions have their own adventures as they join their friend, Jesus, in his travels and ministry. Meticulously researched and warmly told, this is a book to delight children and adults alike.

The Complete Tails of the Travelling Bag
By Griselda Hill, read by William Merryn Hill
Published by SPOKEN REALMS LLC
Available Now / DD

THE COMPLETE
Tails of the Travelling Bag
Written by Griselda Hill
Narrated by William Merryn Hill

from Independent Publishers & Authors


JUNK TO JEWELS
Georgette Beck

"I want a divorce." These words shattered Georgette Beck's world. As a single mom, she battled hopelessness—until God's love restored her. Junk to Jewels is a powerful testimony of faith, resilience, and healing. Let Georgette's story remind you: You are never junk, but a precious jewel.

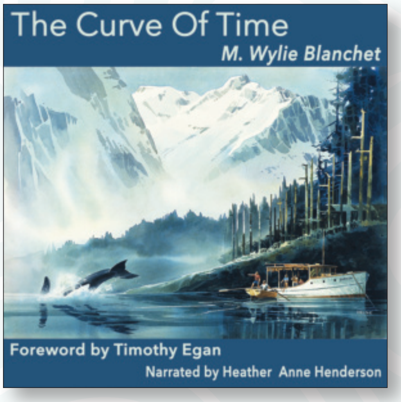
Junk to Jewels: A Journey From Brokenness & Despair to Beauty & Delight
By Georgette Beck, read by Georgette Beck
Published by FEDD BOOKS
Available Now / MP3

Blackbird
A Mother's Reflections on Grief, Loss, and Life After Suicide
BETSY THIBAUT STEPHENSON

Blackbird is a memoir composed in real time, an honest look at the emotional, physical, and spiritual impact of deep despair. Betsy's story inspires important conversations about mental health, grief, and creating a path toward healing.

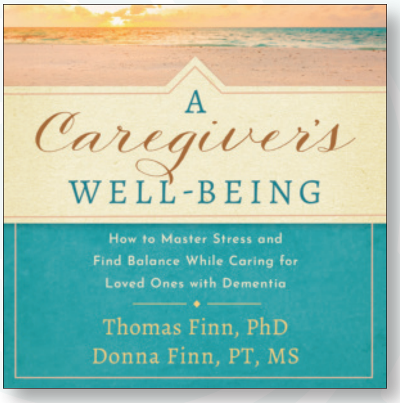
"A very specific, enlightening, and ultimately uplifting story of recovery and understanding."—Midwest Book Review

Blackbird: A Mother's Reflections on Grief, Loss, and Life After Suicide
By Betsy Thibaut Stephenson, read by Julia Hamra
Published by GFB
Available Now / DD / $14.99


The Curve Of Time
M. Wylie Blanchet
Foreword by Timothy Egan
Narrated by Heather Anne Henderson

In the remote early days of Vancouver Island, widow Capi took her five children on adventures aboard her 25-foot boat, The Caprice. Facing dangers like storms, rapids, and wildlife, she explored the rugged coastline year after year during the summer months. This heartfelt, poetic memoir of these daring journeys is perfect summer listening; a timeless classic since 1961

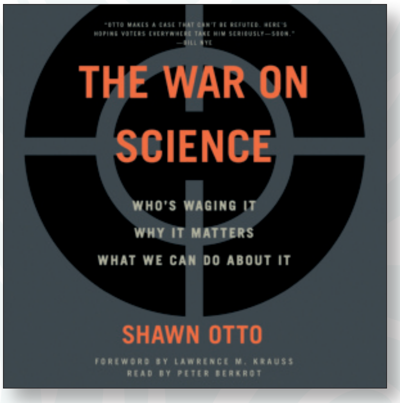
The Curve of Time
By M. Wylie Blanchet, read by Heather Anne Henderson
Published by POST HYPNOTIC PRESS INC.
Available Now / DD


A Caregiver's WELL-BEING
How to Master Stress and Find Balance While Caring for Loved Ones with Dementia
Thomas Finn, PhD
Donna Finn, PT, MS

A Caregiver's Well-Being offers practical tools and emotional support for those caring for a loved one with dementia. Blending science, psychology, and lived experience, this guide helps caregivers manage stress, navigate complex emotions, and find meaning in their role, empowering them to thrive while honoring their loved one's dignity.

A Caregiver's Well-Being: How to Master Stress and Find Balance While Caring for Loved Ones with Dementia
By Thomas Finn, Donna Finn, read by Kristen Price
Published by RIVER GROVE BOOKS
Available Now / MP3

Kick Back with Audiobooks: Selections


THE WAR ON SCIENCE
WHO'S WAGING IT
WHY IT MATTERS
WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT
SHAWN OTTO
FOREWORD BY LAWRENCE M. KRAUSS
READ BY PETER BERKROT

Scientists and the idea of objective knowledge are being bombarded by a vast, well-funded, war on science. Otto offers a clear and methodical breakdown of this massively complex, multi-pronged assault on science and education as well as thought out positive ways to move forward. This audiobook is for all citizens who want to protect our nation and our scientific research.

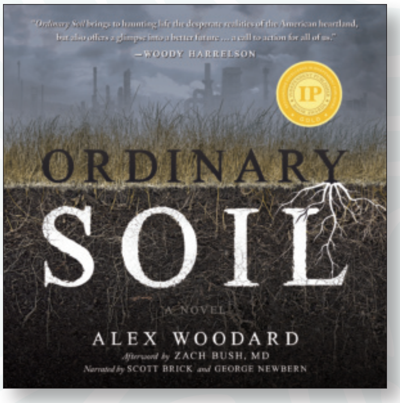
The War on Science: Who's Waging It, Why It Matters, What We Can Do About It
By Shawn Lawrence Otto, read by Peter Berkrot
Published by POST HYPNOTIC PRESS INC.
Available Now / DD

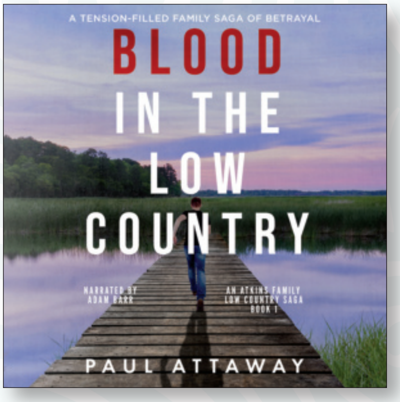
NARRATED BY SCOTT BRICK, WITH GEORGE NEWBERN

"*Ordinary Soil* brings to haunting life the desperate realities of the American heartland but also offers a glimpse into a better future."—*Woody Harrelson*

Terrorized by the past, a young man attempts suicide under a burial elm, unearthing a dark history and diseased roots. A secret waits to be discovered that holds the power to save both man and land.

Ordinary Soil
By Alex Woodard, read by Scott Brick and George Newbern
Published by GREENLEAF BOOK GROUP
Available Now / MP3 / $18.95


—WOODY HARRELSON
ORDINARY
SOIL
A NOVEL
ALEX WOODARD
Afterword by ZACH BUSH, MD
Narrated by SCOTT BRICK and GEORGE NEWBERN


A TENSION-FILLED FAMILY SAGA OF BETRAYAL
BLOOD IN THE LOW COUNTRY
NARRATED BY ADAM BARR
AN ATKINS FAMILY LOW COUNTRY SAGA BOOK 1
PAUL ATTAWAY

When Rose and Monty Atkins' son is accused of murdering his girlfriend, Monty hires a detective to find the killer. When the murderer is revealed, Monty's marriage and everything he treasures are threatened. A story of love, faith, and redemption, and a must-listen for fans of Southern family sagas.

Blood in the Low Country
By Paul Attaway, read by Adam Barr
Published by LINKSLAND PUBLISHING
Available Now / DD

GOLD MEDAL IBPA AWARD FOR BEST FICTION AUDIOBOOK

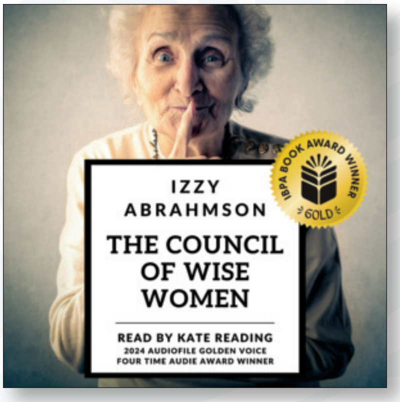
An ordinary woman, her extraordinary daughter, and a secret society…

"Kate Reading captures the foolish and the wise in this charming story…."
—*AudioFile Magazine*

"Thoroughly enjoyable… moving and astutely farcical."—*Kirkus Reviews*

"[The] wise women are delightful and perceptive…"—*Publishers Weekly*

The Council of Wise Women
By Izzy Abrahmson, read by Kate Reading
Published by LIGHT PUBLICATIONS
Available Now / DD


IZZY ABRAHMSON
THE COUNCIL OF WISE WOMEN
IBPA BOOK AWARD WINNER GOLD
READ BY KATE READING
2024 AUDIOFILE GOLDEN VOICE
FOUR TIME AUDIE AWARD WINNER

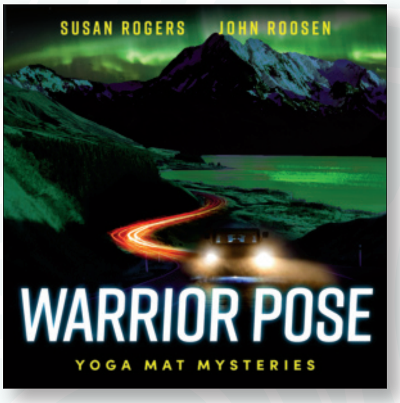
from Independent Publishers & Authors

After a billionaire orchestrated Freeze Act pushes the United States into authoritarianism, one rebel tries to change the system by using a revolutionary technology that allows him to tap into the power of the universe. And now, those billionaires want him dead.

The Matrix meets the current state of America.

Burn the Freeze
By S.M. McVicar, read by S.M. McVicar
Published by HOPEFUL REBEL PUBLISHING
Available Now / MP3

BURN THE
S.M. McVICAR
FREEZE


SUSAN ROGERS
JOHN ROOSEN
WARRIOR POSE
YOGA MAT MYSTERIES

Golden Voice Rupert Degas returns to transport listeners to New Zealand and Indonesia in the fourth Yoga Mat mystery. Degas brings nuanced emotion to Ric's family's dynamics and intensifies the tension of high-stakes scenes. Degas's masterful delivery of the fast-paced, nonstop, life-and-death situations ensures listeners will stay engaged throughout.—*AudioFile*

Warrior Pose
By Susan Rogers and John Roosen, read by Rupert Degas
Published by G-EMS PTY LTD AND PS LLC, AN IMPRINT OF YOGA MAT MYSTERIES
Available Now / DD

Accused of heresy and the murder of her sister, a young orphan flees her medieval Norwegian village and becomes apprenticed to a reclusive witch. But when her studies reveal a darkness beyond what she could have imagined, it threatens to lead to all their downfalls.

Aether
By Nathan Graham Davis, read by Helen Day
Published by AUDIO FLICKS
Coming this August! / Streaming Audio

ÆTHER
Narrated by HELEN DAY
Written by NATHAN GRAHAM DAVIS
Directed by EMANUEL NISAN
AUDIO FLICKS

PETER A. FLANNERY
AQUILA
Read by John Sackville
BATTLE MAGE

Battle Mage by Peter A. Flannery was a phenomenal success, and trying to follow it was always going to be hard, but Peter's done it! *Battle Mage*: *Aquila* contains all the action, camaraderie and emotion that captured people's hearts. Now, this epic fantasy series continues with the story of *Aquila*.

Battle Mage: Aquila
By Peter A. Flannery, read by John Sackville
Published by CHERRY HILL PUBLISHING, LLC
Available Now / DD, CD, MP3-CD

Summer

Listening

> *Narrating* Kill Your Darlings *was like being in a movie, especially since a key story component is a famous movie location. I was able to really project myself into the action, and the reader will, as well. A genuinely thrilling, fun read."*
> —Narrator Steven Weber

KILL YOUR DARLINGS

Peter Swanson
Read by Steven Weber

Kill
Your
Darlings
TO HAVE AND TO HOLD.
FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE.
TIL DEATH DO US PART.
A NOVEL
Peter Swanson
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

Steven Weber superbly delivers Peter Swanson's intriguing mystery. The audiobook's structure goes backwards from 2023 to 1982—telling a story that's like a giant jigsaw puzzle. Ultimately, the puzzle's picture is dark and mind-boggling, but all the pieces fit. Thom and Wendy Graves have been married for 25 years. Wendy is a published poet; Thom, a university English professor. When Wendy discovers Thom is about to reveal a terrible secret, she decides she must kill him. Weber keeps the tension at its peak as their lives unfold in reverse. With timing, keen sensibilities, and touches of dramatic irony, Weber makes each important moment in the couple's lives as real as the moment before. A clever premise does not disappoint, and Weber's performance makes it even better. *S.J.H.*

Harper Audio 8.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9780063433656 $27.99

THE WOMAN IN SUITE 11

Ruth Ware
Read by Imogen Church

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
THE WOMAN IN CABIN 10
RUTH WARE
THE WOMAN IN SUITE 11
READ BY IMOGEN CHURCH
A NOVEL

Imogen Church demonstrates her talent for superb characterization and spot-on timing as she delivers this twisty mystery. Reporter Lo Blacklock has left the UK and is now living in New York with her husband and two young sons. When she travels to Switzerland to attend the opening of a luxury hotel, her trip turns out to be the beginning of sinister events that build on mysteries in her past. Church creates highly believable characters. She depicts Lo as an everywoman who is caught in extraordinary circumstances. Church swiftly moves between accents, drawing the listener into the dialogue among the larger-than-life characters. Her pacing helps to build the tension in this thriller. *K.J.P.*

Simon & Schuster Audio 15.25 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781668131527 $29.99

> *"I feel outrageously lucky to narrate Ruth's books, and I think people are going to love this sequel. I've told Ruth that the tagline should absolutely be 'Here We Lo Again!' Get ready for the ride of the summer."*
> —Narrator Imogen Church

Imogen Church photo by Ali Smith

> *"It was a great book to read, though quite challenging with so many vibrant and important characters to voice. I fell in love with them all but definitely had a soft spot for Miss Hortense and Blossom. I can't wait to read the next installment."*
> —Narrator Debra Michaels

A MURDER FOR MISS HORTENSE

Mel Pennant
Read by Debra Michaels

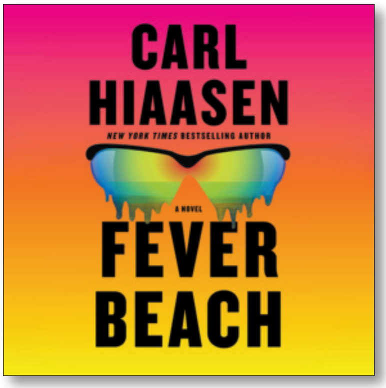
A Murder for Miss Hortense
A Mystery
Mel Pennant

Debra Michaels's lively performance takes full advantage of the descriptive scenes and energetic dialogue in this first novel from playwright Mel Pennant. Miss Hortense, who immigrated to the UK from Jamaica in 1960, was the backbone of her suburban Birmingham neighborhood. She even ran the Pardner, a money-raising and savings club that allowed members to accumulate modest wealth and help develop their community. But tragedy struck, with the community deeply affected by several murders, and Miss Hortense was dismissed from her role as "Pardner Lady." Now, thirty years later, another murder has occurred, and Miss Hortense must use her skills to save the day. Michaels's facility with Caribbean accents—along with her cadence, humor, and ability to capture the wide-ranging personalities—enhance this thoughtful cozy. *S.G.*

Random House Audio 11.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798217076413 $22.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: ISBN 9798217076512 $76.00

FEVER BEACH

Carl Hiaasen
Read by Will Damron



Will Damron embodies the wacky characters in Hiaasen's latest sardonic look at contemporary America. Damron shines as he portrays the dim-witted Dale Figgo, who, in an afternoon rainstorm, happens upon hitchhiker Viva Morales, a clever but broken divorcee. Damron gives a sympathetic tone to Viva as her troubles increase while working at the Mink Foundation, a crooked philanthropic front with a secret agenda run by an aging couple. When Hiaasen adds Twilly Spree to the mix, Damron creates a crazy-sounding voice for the revenge-seeking environmentalist. Together, Viva and Twilly uncover a network of corruption and a clueless congressman with eyes on an even higher office. Damron delivers this cockamamie take on contemporary America with panache. *R.O.*

Random House Audio 14 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798217066230 $25.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: ISBN 9798217066247 $95.00

> *"This was one of my all-time favorite projects. Carl Hiaasen's wit and piercing humor spare no one, and I laughed till it hurt while preparing. It's a deeply cathartic book for this day and age."*
> —Narrator Will Damron

Debra Michaels photo by Jenny Potter, Will Damron photo by Daniel Parvis

A SMALL HOTEL: Small Hotel, Book 1

Suanne Laqueur
Read by Darren Eliker

Darren Eliker masterfully portrays Kennet, the eldest son of the Fiskare family, at a pivotal age in his life. The summer of 1941 brings Ingrid to the Fiskares' hotel, and although she is promised to another, love blooms between her and Kennet. But soon, Ingrid is forced back to Brazil, and Kennet joins the war. Eliker captures young, forbidden love and heartbreak beautifully with breathless declarations, and his narration of wartime events is heartbreaking and so realistic that listeners will hold their breath. When the war ends, Kennet is determined to return to Ingrid despite obstacles. Can their love be rekindled? *L.M.G.*

A Small Hotel
A Novel
Suanne Laqueur

Suanne Laqueur 12.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: $24.95

A TOWN WITH HALF THE LIGHTS ON

Page Getz
Read by Hillary Huber

This audiobook is a contemporary take on the classic epistolary novel. Hillary Huber narrates the story of two transplanted chefs from New York who end up in the hick town of Goodnight, Kansas, after a business disaster. Besides dealing with culture shock, the Solvang family ends up confronting a polluting tire company, the town's major employer. The novel is told through a series of emails, which Huber delivers with such expertise that the personality of each character, whether a local or a New Yorker, comes through. Listeners will find these oddballs compelling. Although the repetition of email addresses is tedious, it's worth listening to this story of community, friendship, good food, and personal integrity. *D.L.G.*

Tantor Media 8.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798331958060 $19.99
Library Ed.: ISBN 9798331958077 $47.95

ON ISABELLA STREET

Genevieve Graham
Read by Liz Leafloor, Erin Moon

"Graham is a master storyteller with a gift to touch the heart." SANTA MONTEFIORE
ON ISABELLA STREET
A NOVEL
USA Today and #1 bestselling author of The Secret Keeper
GENEVIEVE GRAHAM

Set in 1967 in Toronto with scenes in Vietnam, this historical novel is performed admirably and authentically with Canadian inflections throughout by Liz Leafloor and Erin Moon. They deliver the voices and styles of both women and men in just the right tones and cadences. This matters in a novel that jumps from war protest to a psych ward and to the jungles of Vietnam. The plot involves the unlikely friendship of two women who live on the same floor in an Isabella Street apartment building. On the surface the two are quite different: Marion Hart is a disciplined psychiatrist who works with disturbed patients, and Sassy Rankin is an anti-war folksinger. Nonetheless, they bond. Author Graham has done a fine job merging fact and fiction. A satisfying audiobook. *A.D.M.*

Simon & Schuster Audio 15.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781982197032 $23.99

This historical novel is performed admirably and authentically.

THE RIVER IS WAITING

Wally Lamb
Read by Jeremy Sisto

This audiobook has a strong character-driven plot. Actor Jeremy Sisto is a convincing and talented performer who skillfully immerses listeners in the psyche of Corby Ledbetter, particularly with his tone. But this novel is the unremittingly dark story of a man whose life unravels. Corby, an out-of-work commercial artist, is a stay-at-home dad who has taken to morning drinking and ingesting drugs to calm his nerves. One morning, after self-medicating, he runs over and kills his son, Nico, a toddler, one of twins. Most of the remaining plot spools out between court, and then prison, where he is bullied and raped by vicious guards. Corby ultimately dies from Covid. Lamb is an engrossing writer, but this is a tough listen. *A.D.M.*

Simon & Schuster Audio 14.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781797188348 $29.99

SMALL CEREMONIES

Kyle Edwards
Read by Chris Mejaki, Yolanda Bonnell, Dillan Meghan Chiblow, James Dallas Smith, Jay Northcott, John Wamsley, Marion Newman, Monique Mojica, Shane Ghostkeeper, T'ncháy Redvers, Tara Sky, Steve Dangle

Careful and culturally conscious casting ensures that this audiobook about First Nations residents of Winnipeg pulses with authentic voices. The ensemble cast brings to life the young members of the St. Croix High School hockey team and their community. The story unfolds in chapters that each foreground a different character and are distinct in perspective and tone. Together, they create a vivid sonic picture of a vibrant, diverse place and people whose varied heritages give texture to their common experience of colonialism. At the story's beating heart are brash Tomahawk "Tommy" Shields and reserved Clinton Whiteway, voiced by Chris Mejaki (Ojibwe/Odawa) and John Wamsley (Ojibwe/British settler), respectively. Both will have listeners as invested in the Tigers' season as the characters are. *V.S.*

Random House Audio 14.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798217066032 $24.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: ISBN 9798217066049 $76.00

I SEE YOU'VE CALLED IN DEAD

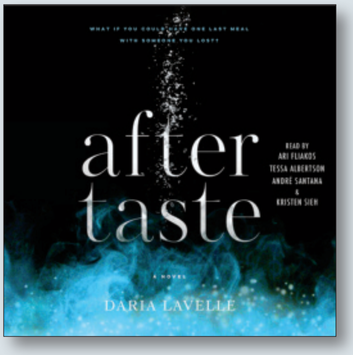
John Kenney
Read by Sean Patrick Hopkins

John Kenney's latest novel successfully walks a tightrope between dark humor and genuine warmth, and Sean Patrick Hopkins's narration provides the necessary balance. Bud Stanley is a newspaper writer who one night drunkenly writes and publishes his own obituary, setting in motion a grimly amusing series of events. Hopkins's even tone perfectly conveys Bud's sarcastic wit, as well as the thoughtful insights that lie just under that veneer. At the heart of the story is the loving connection he shares with Tim, his wise friend and "emotional guardian." Here Hopkins's voice captures tenderness without becoming mawkish. Together, author and narrator have created a funny and affirming novel about how understanding death can transform one's life. *D.B.*

Zibby Publishing 7.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798989923045 $15.99

AFTERTASTE

Daria Lavelle
Read by Ari Fliakos, Tessa Albertson, André Santana, Kristen Sieh


WHAT IF YOU COULD HAVE ONE LAST MEAL WITH SOMEONE YOU LOST?
after taste
READ BY ARI FLIAKOS TESSA ALBERTSON ANDRÉ SANTANA & KRISTEN SIEH
A NOVEL
DARIA LAVELLE

Ari Fliakos's exceptional performance of haunted Kostya Duhovny is among the many pleasures of this immersive debut, a combination love story, Manhattan foodie romp, and otherworldly tale. Fliakos captures Kostya's complex reactions to his supernatural ability to bring back the dead through food. Fliakos is ably aided by Tessa Albertson, André Santana, and Kristen Sieh, who all do fine work. But it's Fliakos's tour-de-force narration that elevates this listening experience. In one extraordinary moment Fliakos does a breathless dramatic monologue that merges foods and flavors while ghosts hover and howl. It all revolves around a Russian émigré's son who is searching for meaning in kitchens and in the hereafter. *A.D.M.*

Simon & Schuster Audio 10.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781668110362 $25.99

Ari Fliakos's exceptional performance is among the many pleasures of this immersive debut.

A/S/L

Jeanne Thornton
Read by Jeanne Thornton

Author Jeanne Thornton performs her novel with a charming casualness that will immediately draw listeners in. In 1998, three queer teenagers bond over creating video games in the early days of Internet chat rooms. Nineteen years later they are all trans women in their 30s, and though they've lost touch and never met in person, they're still haunted by the game they never finished. Thornton's narration is intimate but understated. She uses similar voices for the three main characters, but with enough variation that they sound like distinct people. She's especially good at capturing the rhythms of online communication. This is a heartfelt, melancholy, and insightful novel about early Internet culture, nostalgia, queer and trans identity, and the physical and virtual spaces that shape us. *L.S.*

Recorded Books 15.75 hrs. Unabridged
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798895941102 $34.99
(also CD, MP3)

THE NORTHERN

Jacob McArthur Mooney
Read by Peter Outerbridge

Actor Peter Outerbridge, who doesn't have a large body of work as a narrator of audiobooks, is outstanding in this debut novel by fellow Canadian Mooney. Although the story is told from the point of view of a 12-year-old boy in the early 1950s, it's not nostalgic, and Outerbridge captures the forthright, occasionally detached, tone of the preteen. The other primary characters—males, females, adults, children—also get distinctive and appropriate voices, keeping the listener perfectly oriented. Outerbridge is particularly skilled at portraying little brother Mikey with a higher pitch that avoids being cloying. The novel may be longer than it needs to be, but Mooney's characters are well drawn, and they're given added dimension by Outerbridge's portrayals. *D.B.*

The Northern
READ BY PETER OUTERBRIDGE
JACOB McARTHUR MOONEY

ECW Press 9.25 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781778524431 $22.99

HAPPY LAND

Dolen Perkins-Valdez
Read by Bahni Turpin, Ashley J. Hobbs

Bahni Turpin and Ashley J. Hobbs dazzle with their performance of this historical novel inspired by true events. When Nikki drives into the mountains of North Carolina to visit her grandmother for the first time, she doesn't know what to expect. Soon, she's learning all about her ancestor, Luella, who was queen of a small kingdom there called Happy Land. Hobbs narrates from Nikki's perspective, giving her a touch of a Southern accent and a bright tone. Turpin performs Luella's chapters with a stronger accent and captures the historical atmosphere of the setting, which adds to her rich portrayal of Luella's story. Hobbs and Turpin pair perfectly, bringing vibrant energy to their performances. *K.D.W.*

Penguin Audio 10.25 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217063741 $22.50
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217063758 $95.00

AudioFile®

BEHIND THE MIC

Golden Voice Vikas Adam

AudioFile's Jo Reed spoke with 2025 Golden Voice Vikas Adam about his approach to narration, his theatrical roots, and how he builds such distinctive and believable characters. Vikas Adam is one of the most dynamic and skilled audiobook narrators working today, with a voice that brings dragons, detectives, and deeply human characters to life. His talent behind the mic has set him apart in the field. As actor, director, and teacher, Vikas brings a deep well of theatrical experience and empathy to every performance. He effortlessly voices a host of accents and easily shifts between genders, whether he's narrating a sprawling fantasy series, a poignant family story, or a complex historical narrative. This is an excerpt; hear their full conversation in a bonus episode of our Behind the Mic podcast.

Jo Reed: What was it about narrating audiobooks that felt right for you?

Vikas Adam: Being able to encompass all facets of the story, of all the characters, it was amazing for me. I'm a director as well, I'm a producer and a director for theater, and it felt like a one-person show. I love being able to play all these multiple roles.

JR: And how was it for you acting with your voice rather than having your physicality to use to create a character, and everything has to be filtered through that voice?

VA: Yeah, so funny enough, the only restraint I had was because I was seated. I still found a way to be very physical, and I still am very physical when I work. I've just learned how to minimize it and use certain parts of my body and how to be a little quieter

Narrator Vikas Adam

Photo by Sergio Garcia

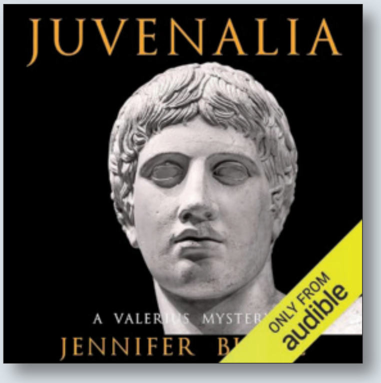
JR: And how to buy appropriate clothing.

VA: And how to buy appropriate clothing. Corduroy and workout wear, quick-drying fabric, is definitely on the no-no list.

JR: How do you prepare for narrating a book, for fiction, most particularly? Let's start there.

VA: Reading through the book, that's a good start, but I'm really looking for writing style. I'm looking to see what that writing style looks like. I get a little esoteric when it comes to this stuff, but I'm looking at the POVs, whether it's first person, third person, what kind of third person, what kind second person, in certain cases, what is the voice of the writing? What is the author trying to convey? What's the setting, what's the world? It's stuff that I, funny enough, I just came from teaching an acting class, and it's the very things I tell my students to be on the lookout for when they're looking at scripts. It's like, what is the world? What are the rules of this world? What are your parameters? And that tells me how I can start approaching. Is there humor in the text? There's a wonderful series, two books that I've done now, the Valerius Mysteries, and they take place in ancient Rome. And it's such a wonderful way to learn about ancient Rom, because the author has packed in so much information that is fascinating and interesting. But the writing is in no way what you would imagine ancient Rome to sound like. It's very, very contemporary in its writing and in the voice of our main character. And so that gave me a little insight. He's a party boy, and he talks as such. And so even on that first page, it gave me insight into what liberties I could take and how far I could go.

JUVENALIA: The Valerius Mysteries, Book 2
Jennifer Burke
Read by Vikas Adam



Vikas Adam narrates this second book in the Valerius Mysteries series, which is set in ancient Rome and features investigator Aemilius Valerius. As playwrights, poets, and artists prepare for Nero's birthday celebration, a poet is attacked, and Valerius must solve the case. Concurrently, a bloodless corpse is found, and Junius Atreus must find the murderer. The two friends work together amid other deaths and attacks to identify the perpetrators. Adam has an amazing talent for finding different voices for the many male and female characters. House servants are timid, emperors are haughty, and bodyguards are deep-voiced and solemn. Most amazing is his prowess at making modern colloquialisms sound perfectly natural in this ancient setting. *L.M.G.*

Blackstone Audio 9.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798212413091 $22.95 (also CD, MP3)
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798212413084 $69.95 (also CD)

Adam has an amazing talent.

JR: I want to talk about your Audie Award winner, *Nice Dragons Finish Last*. I am not a fantasy reader or listener, but in preparing for this interview, I said, all right, I'm going to listen. I was so captivated and so thrilled that it's part of a series and I have more of these Heartstriker books to enjoy. It was amazing.

VA: It's such a fun book and a fun series.

JR: And compelling, and the characters are vibrant, and you are creating voices for dragons and people and other magical creatures. So let's talk about how you arrived at these characterizations. What was your process here?

VA: So when I work, over the years as an actor, I have just studied and leaned into and created all these various ways of approaching creating characters. And so with this one, with each of them, I just started with archetypes and I built from there. Julius was our sweet, sweet, sweet, nice, lovely, lovely human dragon. And you know what I started doing with him? I actually was like, he is the most ideal version of myself that I wish I could be. I tried to approach it that way. But for Bethesda, his mom, I looked at this complete queen/ruler archetype and just went from there. Bob, who's the seer, he's like a fan favorite. It's like, if they ever did a series, like a TV series, I would be trying to fight tooth and nail to be like, y'all, you got to let me, I got to be Bob. And I'm usually pretty content being behind the mic, but this would be one where I'd be like, get me in front of the camera. I want to be Bob. He lives in his own reality while he has one foot firmly planted in the one that the book takes place. And it was just so much fun trying to find what set him apart, but while keeping him grounded at the same time, not just playing crazy to play crazy.

JR: And what about the narrative voice, which is so important for any book?

VA: When it comes to the narrative voice, I've learned over the years, and I continue learning. I want to keep it casual. I want to keep it conversational, especially now as we get into a place where we're listening to podcasts and we're listening to conversations, where we are as a society becoming a lot more audio-friendly. And I think a while back, it used to be a place where we needed to be extremely slow, a lot more precious about the words, and now we're at a point where it's so a part of our daily lives that we can make it a little more conversational. And so I try to keep that with the narrative and not get too precious with the words. Once again, it depends. If the writing calls for it, then I'll make that adjustment.

JR: Fill us in on the Andy Mills series. It's a character-driven mystery set in 1950s San Francisco, and *Lavender House*, the first book in the series, really sets the scene.

VA: Oh my goodness. That book was so eye-opening to me. And also a really needed book. I love playing opposites. I love dichotomies. And the fact that we have Andy Mills, he is a man's man during that time. And he goes through this journey through the series of books, which are still coming out—that's the stuff I love. He's gay in the 1950s, and he's been thrown off the force because he was discovered during the raids that would happen. I love historical fiction. It's like, why couldn't I learn history this way?

JR: Is there a special skill in narrating thrillers?

VA: Staying in the moment. I mean, almost forgetting what happens. I think for me at least, I cannot be thinking about what the big reveal is. If it's first person, you're there with the character, so you're just going along. And so it's easier to stay in that moment. When it's third person, especially if it's a third-person omniscient, where we get everyone's point of view, we're like, okay, it's so easy. You've got to stay as neutral as you can. Don't give it away. ■

AudioFile BEHIND THE MIC
Listen to Behind the Mic with *AudioFile* Magazine:
audiofilemagazine.com/podcast

BAD NATURE

Ariel Courage
Read by Cia Court

Narrator Cia Court's portrayal of a troubled woman's journey of self-discovery is intriguing and engaging. Heather literally flees from her terminal cancer prognosis with a cross-country road trip and a final confrontation with her absent father over his real and imagined sins. Listeners feel Heather's anger over learning her fate and her refusal to surrender to despair. Court and the author do not take the easy path by characterizing Heather as a sympathetic victim. Instead, she is an unpleasant, unrepentant pleasure seeker who defies death and refuses to share—or even admit—the depth of her pain. At first, listeners may find Heather a formidable figure who accepts, even welcomes, her fate, but eventually her true humanity and apprehension emerge. *M.S.*

Macmillan Audio 9 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781250386809 $19.99

SLEEP

Honor Jones
Read by Rebecca Lowman

Jones's debut novel continually shifts between Margaret's traumatic girlhood and her current life. She's a divorced mom with two daughters, a dominating mother, an earnest ex, and a new boyfriend whom she enjoys, especially sexually. Narrator Rebecca Lowman embraces her character's inner life. Lowman's tone and tempo are just right as she voices Margaret's anxious thoughts and struggles. The story balances the demands on Margaret as a mother, her work as a magazine editor, and her complex relationship with her own mother, who is elegant yet intrusive. Jones skillfully portrays the mother-daughter issues and obligations, and is especially apt in her depiction of Margaret's symbiotic relationship with her best friend, Biddy. *A.D.M.*

Penguin Audio 8.25 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798217021314 $22.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: ISBN 9798217021321 $57.00

FUNDAMENTALLY

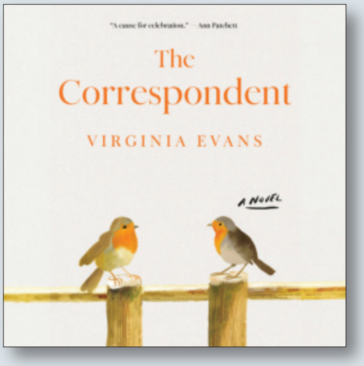
Nussaibah Younis
Read by Sarah Slimani

Sarah Slimani gives an engaging and often funny performance of this satirical debut novel. Nadia is a London lecturer who, after writing an academic article about the deradicalization of ISIS brides, takes a job in Iraq to head a UN program to repatriate those women to their homes. Slimani captures the many layers of the novel, which uses satire as a vehicle to explore radicalization, racism, the hypocrisy of the UN, religion, feminism, and much more. Nadia is immediately out of her depth, and Slimani beautifully voices her idealism, determination, and growing cynicism. Her excellent portrayal of Nadia's various UN colleagues adds to the audiobook's comic charm without detracting from its serious themes. A unique and thought-provoking debut. *L.S.*

Penguin Audio 9.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798217016747 $20.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: ISBN 9798217016754 $76.00

THE CORRESPONDENT

Virginia Evans
Read by Maggi-Meg Reed,
Jane Oppenheimer, Carly Robins,
Jeff Ebner, David Pittu,
Chris Andrew Ciulla, Mark Bramhall,
Petrea Burchard, Robert Petkoff,
Kimberly Farr, et al.



Maggi-Meg Reed is at the top of her game in her nuanced portrayal of Sybil Van Antwerp. Sybil shares her life in letters to friends and family, as well as strangers and authors she admires, including Joan Didion and Ann Patchett. However, there's one mysterious letter she writes but never mails. A divorced septuagenarian, Sybil is slowly going blind. As an adoptee who has always wondered about her parentage, Sybil does a DNA test and begins a journey with stunning results. The thousands of letters she has written and received reveal lives connected by Sybil's delicate thread. Thanks to outstanding narrations, responses to her letters allow each correspondent to emerge as a fully realized individual. Beautiful prose and amazing performances make this audiobook one listeners won't want to miss. *S.J.H.*

Random House Audio 8.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798217066377 $22.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: ISBN 9798217066384 $76.00

Beautiful prose and amazing performances make this audiobook one listeners won't want to miss.

THE COLORS OF APRIL: Fiction on the Vietnam War's Legacy 50 Years Later

Quan Manh Ha, Cab Tran [Eds.]
Read by Quyen Ngo

Narrator Quyen Ngo delivers a quietly powerful performance in this moving anthology of short stories that explore postwar and contemporary Vietnam through the voices of Vietnamese and Vietnamese American writers. Ngo's fluent narration immerses listeners in 28 translated stories that touch on themes of war, grief, trauma, and reconciliation. She ensures that each work has a clear beginning and ending, and showcases her range through skillful portrayals of characters from varying generations and backgrounds. Standout stories include the reflective and questioning "A Vietnamese Arrière-Boutique" by Kevin D. Pham and the incisive "Bad Things Didn't Happen" by Gin To. An essential listening experience for anyone seeking a deeper understanding of the War in Vietnam and its enduring legacy. *V.T.M.*

Vibrance Press 10.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798890930958 $19.95

ALL THE OTHER MOTHERS HATE ME

Sarah Harman
Read by Georgina Sadler

Profanity seems to be the only way to adequately describe the outrageous behavior of a classmate of Florence's 10-year-old son, Dylan. Narrator Georgina Sadler's resigned matter-of-fact delivery sets a hilariously irreverent tone in this addictive listen. Just as it seems there might finally be an opening for Florence to revive the pop band career of her youth, Dylan's classmate goes missing. When Dylan is identified as a suspect, Florence must juggle her dream of stardom with tackling the mystery. Florence may have a bad reputation among the other moms, but she loves her son fiercely and will do anything to clear his name. In a lively performance, Sadler seamlessly transitions among characters of all ages with American and British accents. Listeners will savor every minute of her dynamic narration. *A.L.C.*

Penguin Audio 11.25 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217016549 $25.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217016556 $95.00

AWAKE IN THE FLOATING CITY

Susanna Kwan
Read by Catherine Ho

Catherine Ho delivers a masterful performance of Susanna Kwan's poignant debut novel about identity and creating a sense of home amid displacement. Set in a rain-drenched near-future San Francisco, the story follows Bo, a young elder-care worker who faces uncertainty after her mother's disappearance. When Mia, Bo's centenarian neighbor, offers the solitary Bo a job, she readily accepts. Ho blends dulcet tones and resonance to provide an impressive emotional range that captures Bo's reluctance to live in Canada with her relatives and her transformative friendship with Mia. However, it's Ho's humorous and tender portrayal of the enigmatic Mia and her Asian mannerisms that especially shines. Ho lends a haunting beauty to this thought-provoking story. *M.F.*

Random House Audio 11 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217066414 $22.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217066421 $76.00

MY FRIENDS

Fredrik Backman
Read by Marin Ireland

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
A MAN CALLED OVE
FREDRIK BACKMAN
MY FRIENDS
A NOVEL
READ BY MARIN IRELAND

Fredrik Backman, the talented Swedish novelist, is a witty writer and a keen observer. Golden Voice narrator Marin Ireland grandly performs this story of art, friendship, and what it means to be a teen. Ireland replicates the snarky tone of Louisa, who has just released herself from foster care to go see the work of art that is the fulcrum of the plot. Ireland captures the spirit of four teenagers—Kim Kim, Joar, Ali, and Ted—whom we see 25 years earlier in flashbacks. She beautifully delivers Ted's slightly different accent and his melancholy mood as he and the chattering Louisa take a cross-country train ride to the quartet's hometown. Backman has created indelible characters and laugh-out-loud moments. Ireland is simply splendid. *A.D.M.*

Simon & Schuster Audio 13 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781668131602 $29.99 (also CD)

Ireland is simply splendid.

JULIE CHAN IS DEAD

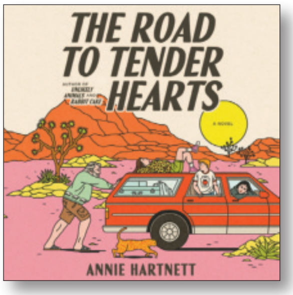
Liann Zhang
Read by Yu-Li Alice Shen

Narrator Yu-Li Alice Shen delivers a wild, bingeable listening experience in this fast-paced debut. Identical twins Julie and Chloe, who lost their parents at age 4, grew up worlds apart. Julie, who was raised by their miserable, greedy aunt, works a dead-end job, while Chloe, who was adopted by a wealthy family, lives a life of luxury and is a popular influencer. One day, Julie receives a strange call from Chloe and goes to her apartment—only to find her dead. Julie quickly assumes Chloe's identity and lifestyle. Shen masterfully captures the dark humor in Zhang's sharp critique of influencer culture. While the story's latter half takes an unexpected turn into cult-like territory, Shen's dynamic performance keeps listeners entertained. *V.T.M.*

Simon & Schuster Audio 9.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781668114230 $25.99

THE ROAD TO TENDER HEARTS

Annie Hartnett
Read by Mark Bramhall



Mark Bramhall's nuanced and slyly humorous portrayal of gruff but tenderhearted PJ Halliday ensures that the 63-year-old divorced father comes across as sympathetic despite his many flaws. PJ's loneliness is mildly quelled by his daily breakfast with his patient ex-wife, Ivy, and her partner, Fred. A narrative complication occurs when PJ learns that the husband of his high school girlfriend, Michelle, has died. At the same time, PJ becomes guardian of the two young grandchildren of his late brother. With his daughter, Sophie, and the grandkids, PJ hits the road to the retirement community where Michelle lives, hoping for a second chance. Bramhall's winning performance ensures that listeners are drawn into this relatable story about family and redemption. *M.J.*

Random House Audio 11.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217073344 $23.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217073702 $76.00

SKY DADDY
Kate Folk
Read by Kristen Sieh

Kristen Sieh's performance brings the listener into the life of a complicated woman whose sexual desire is fixated on commercial airliners. Lisa works as an online comment moderator in San Francisco. She's good at her job, but she reserves her passion for airplanes. She perceives flights as dates, turbulence as flirtation—and a smooth flight could lead to something more. Lisa's friends begin to suspect something when her vision board fills up with plane imagery. Sieh's voice captures Lisa's desire for the perfect airborne partner, fully aware of how her family and co-workers may see her should her truth be revealed. Sieh's skillful delivery never wavers. Her approach to this work fully maintains the audiobook's comedic tone and timing, and hits all the emotional moments. *S.P.C.*

Random House Audio 9.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217020676 $22.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217020683 $76.00

ATAVISTS: Stories
Lydia Millet
Read by Hillary Huber, Devon Sorvari, Patrick Zeller, Pete Cross

This collection of 14 stories by Lydia Millet is timely and clever. Featuring four talented narrators, Hillary Huber, Devon Sorvari, Patrick Zeller, and Pete Cross, the stories and characters overlap and interweave. Huber's four narrations are droll and sardonic, with a sassy, smart teen vocalization in "Artist." Sorvari's narrations are leisurely, thoughtful, and clear; one standout is "Cosmetologist," which depicts an aesthetician talking to a woman while performing a Brazilian wax. Zeller's narrations are emotive; in "Terrorist," he emphatically narrates a story of a man with a dog named Bette Midler. Finally, Cross embodies a young man's perspective in two stories, including "Mixologist," in which he is a Stanford grad who works at a big-box store. *S.E.G.*

Dreamscape 6.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781666690316 $34.99

ACCIDENTS HAPPEN: Stories
F.H. Batacan
Read by Amielynn Abellera, Ramón de Ocampo

ACCIDENTS
HAPPEN
Stories
FH
BATACAN

In this engaging collection of short stories by Filipino writer and journalist F.H. Batacan (*Smaller and Smaller Circles*), Amielynn Abellera and Ramón de Ocampo alternate narrating the riveting mysteries. Abellera is good at voicing the more suspenseful stories with her faster, clipped style of speaking, while de Ocampo tackles the introspective character studies by languidly drawing out his words. Both narrators are Filipino-born actors, and although not all the stories take place in the Philippines, their voicing of accents and colloquialisms adds to the flavor of the gripping, beautifully paced yarns. The mystery of the human heart is a theme in each story, regardless of its length, making this an overall great listening experience. *D.G.*

Recorded Books 7 hrs. Unabridged
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798889567509 $24.99
(also CD, MP3)

> *"Susin has a fantastic ear and a ruthless sense of humor. My ratio of working hours to finished hours went way up due to an abnormal amount of chuckling."*
> —Narrator Carol Schneider

Photo by Xanthe Elbrick

SNAP
Susin Nielsen
Read by Carol Schneider

"A SHARP, EXCEPTIONALLY FUNNY NOVEL THAT FEELS LIKE AN AFFIRMATION FOR THE SHORT-TEMPERED AMONG US. . . . A TRIUMPH."
SNAP
THREE GOOD PEOPLE
THREE BIG MISTAKES
A NOVEL
SUSIN NIELSEN

Carol Schneider performs the many voices in this comic novel with a sure sense of its humor and pathos. She does accents well, shifts smoothly among the many characters, and gives a distinct tone and tempo to the three leads: children's author Frances Partridge, whose "snap" occurs at a middle school; auto mechanic Geraint Blevins, who reacts creatively to his unctuous boss having bedded his wife; and the youthful Parker Poplawski, who responds angrily to a TV star's obscene advances. The three meet and bond at an anger management class, and their comic adventures fuel the plot. A popular Canadian children's author with a number of TV credits, Nielsen knows of what she writes. This is a fine audiobook and an impressive debut in adult fiction. *A.D.M.*

Harper Audio 9.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781443473316 $24.99

WHERE THE RIVERS MERGE

Mary Alice Monroe
Read by Mary Alice Monroe, Jenna Lamia, Cassandra Campbell

Octogenarian Eliza Pickney is the matriarch of her vast homestead in the lush South Carolina Low Country, and her plan to preserve the family land in a conservancy disrupts her descendants' expectation of inheritance. The story unfolds in two timelines: Jenna Lamia charmingly narrates Eliza's stories from her early life, while Cassandra Campbell superbly portrays Eliza in her late 80s. Lamia's sweet, unsophisticated depiction of young Eliza is softly Southern. Campbell uses an elderly but far from feeble voice for Eliza and impressively provides differentiated timbres for two young women Eliza takes under her wing. The final section, beautifully delivered by the author, sheds light on the history behind the story. *N.M.C.*

Harper Audio 12.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9780063249462 $27.99

STRANGERS IN TIME: A World War II Novel

David Baldacci
Read by Stewart Crank, Alexandra Boulton, John Lee, Nicola F. Delgado, Matthew Lloyd Davies, Joe Pitts, David Baldacci [Note]

A group of acclaimed narrators delivers an absorbing performance of David Baldacci's new novel. In 1944 London, well-born 15-year-old Molly, 14-year-old Charlie from London's East Side, and Ignatius Oliver, a bereaved bookshop owner, are flung together to forge a found family in the midst of war. While the writing suggests a young adult novel, the complex story will certainly engage adult listeners. Stewart Crank's Charlie shines as a plucky boy who finds joy wherever. Alexandra Boulton's Molly is a sweet-voiced mix of kindhearted and imperious. John Lee's somewhat theatrical delivery captures the mysterious Ignatius. Nicola F. Delgado, Matthew Lloyd Davies, and Joe Pitts perform remarkable cameos of the other characters. And Baldacci pulls everything together in his well-read delivery of an interesting author's note. *A.C.S.*

Hachette Audio 13.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781668642696 $31.99

THE USUAL DESIRE TO KILL

Camilla Barnes
Read by Harriet Walter

The Usual Desire to Kill
Camilla Barnes
Read by Harriet Walter

It's possible that another performer could make this delicious audiobook more fun than Harriet Walter has, but hard to see how. "The usual desire to kill" is the emotion felt by two English sisters who are trying to cope with their aging and blithely infuriating parents who have moved themselves to a ramshackle stone house in rural France. Walter's astringent delivery is deadpan funny and so skillfully judged that even the occasional llama in the kitchen seems plausible. Barnes, a playwright, gives their actor daughter a marvelously apt subplot involving King Lear, while at home their dotty mother lies about a needed hip replacement and their father tends chickens and pretends he can't hear his wife. It's mad fun, but also far more than skin deep. *B.G.*

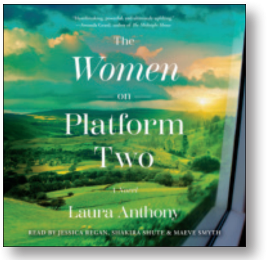
Simon & Schuster Audio 6.25 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781668111086 $19.99

> *Walter's astringent delivery is deadpan funny.*

THE WOMEN ON PLATFORM TWO

Laura Anthony
Read by Jessica Regan, Shakira Shute, Maeve Smyth

This moving audiobook is a tribute to the women of Ireland who championed reproductive rights and changed the laws of a country where all forms of birth control were prohibited in the 1970s. It's not merely a polemical piece; it's a poignant, heartwarming novel about Irish women from different backgrounds who formed deep attachments to one another and to the cause of reproductive freedom. Three talented actors bring these brave women to life. Jessica Regan portrays Saoirse, a modern woman who benefits from Ireland's new laws; Shakira Shute animates Maura, whose calm, genteel voice hides spousal abuse. Maeve Smyth portrays Bernie, who is lovable and determined. Each narrator sounds true to her character and speaks clearly in an easily comprehensible Irish broeue. *D.L.G.*


The Women on Platform Two
A Novel
Laura Anthony
Read by Jessica Regan, Shakira Shute & Maeve Smyth

Simon & Schuster Audio 10 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781797186245 $25.99

TELL ME SOMETHING GOOD

Court Stevens
Read by Marin Ireland, Charlie Thurston, Annalee Scott

Marin Ireland's skillful third-person narration engages listeners in a complex plot that shifts through multiple points of view and timelines. Close attention is required to follow the characters and the secrets they're determined to keep. The author plants seeds about the 20-year-old murders of a group of young women, tangled relationships, and the present-day story, which begins with Anna supporting her dying mother, Star. The Southern setting heightens the atmosphere, emphasizing the divide between the wealthy hunting lodge owners and the inhabitants of the struggling nearby town. Charlie Thurston narrates Jack's journal, adding emotional weight, while Annalee Scott voices Anna's inserts, offering intimate perspectives. Together, the narrators create a layered performance resulting in an immersive, though demanding, audiobook experience. *E.Q.*

HarperCollins Focus 8.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9780840707697 $22.49

Indie Spotlight: *The Council of Wise Women*

***AudioFile* spoke with author Mark Binder (pen name Izzy Abrahmson) and Golden Voice narrator Kate Reading about creating the audiobook of *The Council of Wise Women*, which just won the IBPA Gold Award for Fiction.**

AudioFile: Mark, you are a storyteller yourself and have narrated several of your own audiobooks. How did you decide that Kate would be the right voice for *The Council of Wise Women*?

Mark Binder: Honestly, it was hard letting go. I've been writing and performing stories in the Village Life series for years and years. I tried recording it myself, got about a hundred pages in. Then I hit the scenes where six or seven women are having an animated conversation. I tried four times. And realized, "Nope. Can't do that."

Kate was my first (and only) choice as a narrator. We'd met at the Audie Awards, and I'd been a fan for years. She's got such a beautiful and engaging tone and a wonderful way with characters.

When I got the first chapter for proof-listening, I had a terrifying worry: "What if I don't like it?" That vanished in about a minute. And by the end, listening to Kate reading my book was like discovering it again.

AF: Kate, you are a Golden Voice and a very experienced and much-lauded narrator. How did you decide that *The Council of Wise Women* would be a project that you would take on?

Kate Reading: I love fables. There is something so grounding and reassuring about their timelessness, especially in these uncertain days. I love Mark's (Izzy's) characters, the absurdly high stakes, the drama, the humor, and—of course—that the smart women prevail!

AF: Mark, what was your inspiration for writing *The Council of Wise Women*?

MB: As Kate notes, this book is inspired by a fabled village of fools, who are often called the "Wise Men of Chelm"—so I decided to write about the women. Sarah Cohen gives birth to a brilliant daughter in a time and place where girls' roles were limited. But young Rachel is always asking questions and pushing boundaries. Yes, there are moments of foolishness, but finally, the Council of Wise Women begins to exert their power.

AF: Kate, how did you create the character voices in *The Council of Wise Women*?

Narrator Kate Reading

Author Mark Binder

Kate Reading photo by DJ Corey Photography, Mark Binder photo by Berge Ara Zobian

Vivian Wood at the IBPA Book Awards

Vivian Wood photo by Coopersmith Photography.jpg

THE COUNCIL OF WISE WOMEN: The Village Life
Izzy Abrahmson
Read by Kate Reading

IZZY
ABRAHMSON
THE COUNCIL OF WISE WOMEN
READ BY KATE READING
(AUDIE AWARD WINNER)

Golden Voice Kate Reading captures the foolish and the wise in this charming story of a Jewish village. When twins are born to the Cohen family, their mother quickly discovers that the male twin is receiving more attention and affection from the community than her little daughter. When Mrs. Cohen is invited to join a secret group of wise women, she soon learns the ways they use their quiet power to keep one another safe—and the men in line. Reading is an absolute delight when it comes to voice work. There is no exaggeration in her accents, and she makes each character sparkle. *V.B.*

Light Publications 11.25 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: $24.95

Reading captures the foolish and the wise in this charming story.

KR: Mark and I talked about what the tone of the voices should sound like: bold, earthy, slightly foreign, both wise and foolish. The characters are so well drawn, and the dialogue is so precise, that the voices are embedded in the writing: they just appear. I've played multiple Jewish and Israeli characters onstage, which was helpful for me in finding the voices of these small village folk.

AF: Mark, can you share with us some of the joys and challenges of producing an audiobook independently?

MB: As much as it's challenging to be "independent," audiobooks have become part of my process as a writer. Sometimes, when I stumble over sentences, rather than "acting" as narrator, I correct the manuscript. Actually, this happens fairly frequently, so I've learned not to release new books until the audiobook is completed.

There's also a profound difference between narration and live storytelling. In front of an audience, I pump out a ton of energy and expressiveness. For audiobooks, this needs to be pulled back, otherwise listeners get exhausted. But if I pull back too much the performance feels flat. It's a see-saw. When the project is finally locked and sounds wonderful, it's such a relief and a profound joy.

One huge advantage of working with Kate's company, Madison Productions, as an independent was the way she and her engineer, Erik Synnestvedt, calmly took care of all the details and tweaks. I got to listen to a delicious reading of my book without having to spend the summer in a darkened recording studio agonizing over every syllable.

But then the truly gargantuan challenge for an "independent" begins—getting word out. I'm not famous (yet). Most *AudioFile* readers have never heard of me or my pen name. Kate, however, has her fans, and I hope that they'll give this book a try . . . and then go on to read or listen to my other work.

AF: Is there anything else either of you would like to share about *The Council of Wise Women*?

KR: I was delighted that *The Council of Wise Women* audiobook won the Gold Award for Fiction at the IBPA Book Awards, held in St. Paul, Minnesota, and even more delighted that my daughter Vivian Wood, who lives there, could accept the award on our behalf. A lovely collision of my worlds.

MB: There is widespread belief that change can only happen after suffering and struggle. *The Council of Wise Women* is about ordinary people trying to make each other's lives better. Of course there is some resistance, but imagine a world where wisdom is valued. What if an entire community was able to actually listen to the voices of women, and then choose to do something new and different? That would be worth celebrating. ■

THE SOUND AND THE FURY

William Faulkner
Read by Edoardo Ballerini, Shaun Taylor-Corbett, Bronson Pinchot, Robin Miles

One of the masterpieces of modernist American fiction, this may be a book that is better listened to than read. The intellectually challenged mind of Benjy Compson, voiced here by Golden Voice Edoardo Ballerini, is more easily entered via the ears than the eyes, and Bronson Pinchot's portrayal of Benjy's brother, the thoroughly reprehensible Jason Compson, is the nightmare he should be. Shaun Taylor-Corbett as Quentin and Robin Miles, delivering the only section that is not in first-person stream of consciousness, are also quite fine. Much of the novel rewards the kind of detailed study that can only be done on the page, but this audio version provides a matchless experience. *D.M.H.*

Blackstone Audio 9.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798212633314 $22.95
(also CD, MP3)
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798212633307 $59.95
(also CD)

MONEY

Emile Zola
Read by Leighton Pugh

Leighton Pugh masterfully delivers Emile Zola's heady mix of urbane prose, playful dialogue, and meticulous descriptions of stock market trading and manipulation in this one-of-a-kind cautionary tale. It's the roaring 1860s of the Second French Empire. Growth and prosperity are in the air, the Suez Canal is almost complete, and a devious stock market speculator plans to artificially inflate shares of Banque Universelle to create billions. Pugh is especially adept at capturing a sense of foreboding as the speculator's checkered past of bankruptcy, political intrigue, and avarice threatens to bring France's financial system to its knees. Although published in 1893, this eighteenth novel in Zola's Dickens-like Rougon-Macquart series describes a world of unsustainable growth, social stratification, and sexual abuse that sounds altogether too modern. *B.P.*

Naxos AudioBooks 18 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781781984994 $44.00

FAHRENHEIT 451

Ray Bradbury
Read by Penn Badgley

FAHRENHEIT
451
RAY BRADBURY
READ BY PENN BADGLEY

Like many sci-fi authors, Bradbury predicted many of today's less admirable achievements, such as earbuds and huge TVs. So not surprisingly, this 1953 title is timeless. Penn Badgley, pleasant-voiced and convincing, is an outstanding narrator. His tone resonates with personality, and his subtle character shifts are effective, especially as he portrays this novel's antihero, a fireman whose job is to burn books. Badgley's pace is quick yet easy to follow. Even longer monologues are clearly phrased. He can offer a warm observation one minute and turn into a cold commentator the next, skillfully making Bradbury's message accessible. At one point, exhorting the protagonist to actively embrace life, one character says, "Stuff your eyes with wonder." This audiobook invites you to do the same with your ears. *L.B.F.*

Simon & Schuster Audio 4.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781668133798 $17.99

> *Penn Badgley, pleasant-voiced and convincing, is an outstanding narrator.*

MANON LESCAUT

Abbé Prévost
Read by Justin Avoth, Sean Barrett

NAXOS AudioBooks
COMPLETE CLASSICS
UNABRIDGED
ABBÉ PRÉVOST
MANON LESCAUT
Read by Justin Avoth with Sean Barrett

Prévost's 1731 novel of a flawed and tragic love is richly served by two fine performers. Sean Barrett plays the framing part of an older man to whom Manon's lover, the Chevalier des Grieux, tells the story of their blighted romance. Barrett's warm, rich, slightly raspy timbre brings gravity and warmth to his role. His intelligence especially shines as he narrates the enlightening introduction by Angela Scholar. Justin Avoth performs with restrained passion, occasionally breaking into full-throated acting at intense moments. He balances the two modes well and delivers a quiet, particularly powerful, moment at the audiobook's close. The talented narrators deliver an engaging version of this small classic of early French literature. *W.M.*

Naxos AudioBooks 7.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781781985281 $16.00

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE

Tennessee Williams
Read by Amy Brenneman, Fred Coffin, Vincent D'Onofrio, Jamie Hanes, Glenne Headly, Lyvingston Holmes, Armando Molina, Rondi Reed, David Selby, Danny Strauss

Accentuating the biting intelligence, slashing humor, and emotional devastation of Tennessee Williams's 1947 script, BBC Radio and L.A. Theatre Works came together in 1998 to create an extremely natural, very human audio version of one of America's most acclaimed theatrical works. When a woman with nowhere left to go visits her sister and her sister's husband in New Orleans, she finds their present and her past won't meet her desires for any kind of bright future. Glenne Headly (Blanche), Amy Brenneman (Stella), and Vincent D'Onofrio (Stanley) all give wonderfully understated performances that present the characters' raw world not as make-believe but as something that could take place just around the corner. Audio theater at its finest. *B.P.*

L.A. Theatre Works 2 hrs. Audio Program
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781682661963 $6.95

A LITTLE DAYLIGHT LEFT: Poems

Sarah Kay
Read by Sarah Kay

Some of the poems in this collection were recorded at a reading in New York City, where Kay grew up. Her hometown is also one of her subjects. In those recordings, she connects with her audience, and we can hear the joy that she and they share in her very fine readings of her very fine poetry. She also reminds us of her successful background in spoken-word poetry—although even her longest, most narrative poems would benefit from the close study sometimes given to printed texts. It's refreshing to hear a poet enjoying herself even when she is revealing some of her deepest feelings and finding ways to connect with listeners. That joy comes through in the studio recordings, as well. *D.M.H.*

Random House Audio 2.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217065417 $12.50
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217065424 $38.00

THE COMPLETE POETRY

Maya Angelou
Read by Robin Miles

There are few voices better suited to Angelou's poetry than that of Golden Voice Robin Miles. Somehow, there's a consistent sweetness to Miles's tone, even when she performs Angelou's most emotional and wrenching titles. At the same time, Miles's lovely vocal power is ever present and inspiring, matching Angelou's style. Miles's rendition of the classic "And Still I Rise" captures that power, and other notable poems like the clever "I Hate to Lose Something" add a level of sly humor. Angelou's Inaugural poem, "On the Pulse of Morning," maintains the beauty of its original reading by the author herself. With such a wealth of poems, a pause between titles is vital for the sake of clarity, and there are noticeable transitions that move too hastily. Otherwise, an excellent audiobook. *L.B.F.*

Random House Audio 3.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9780593911471 $15.00

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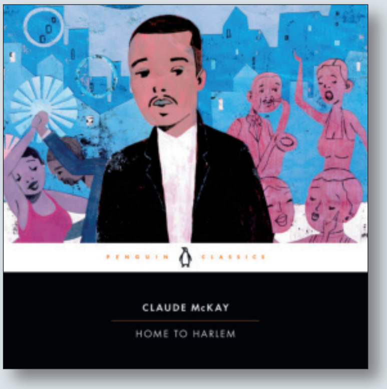
HOME TO HARLEM

Claude McKay,
Belinda Edmondson [Intro.]
Read by Kevin R. Free



As Kevin R. Free deftly narrates this 1928 bestseller with understated ease, the strength, newfound artistic freedoms, and dizzying magic of the Harlem Renaissance come to life. The Roaring Twenties roar loudly in wonderfully vivid descriptions of gambling, prostitution, cutting-edge jazz, and perfectly groomed mobsters, but it's the story of a job-hopping down-on-his-luck longshoreman who falls in love with an equally down-on-her-luck call girl that will tug at listeners' hearts. Author Claude McKay was a master of dialogue and dialect, and Golden Voice Free is at his best giving distinct voices and accents to the many tough guys (and girls), rail workers, and kitchen staff. The bisexual McKay never shied away from discussions of sexual freedom, racism, and class prejudices. Powerful, important listening. *B.P.*

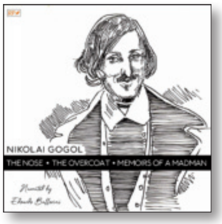
Penguin Audio 6.25 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217066513 $17.50
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217066520 $85.50

Powerful, important listening.

THE NOSE, THE OVERCOAT, AND MEMOIRS OF A MADMAN

Nikolai Gogol, Constance Garnett [Trans.]
Read by Edoardo Ballerini

Edoardo Ballerini splendidly narrates three of the Russian writer Gogol's best-known works. All three display the author's use of the grotesque and surreal. "The Nose" and "The Overcoat" also exhibit Gogol's satire of the Russian bureaucratic hierarchy. Anyone wishing for an entry into Russian literature would do well to listen to these three works. Golden Voice Ballerini has a splendidly smooth American-accented baritone. He delivers the narrative portions of these works clearly and with confidence. The dialogue is done capably, with slight variations for each character. He even does well in trilling his "r's." For "The Nose," he gives the character an appropriately nasal-sounding voice. It's a pleasure to hear all three works given such wonderful narrations. *M.T.F.*


NIKOLAI GOGOL
THE NOSE • THE OVERCOAT • MEMOIRS OF A MADMAN
Narrated by Edoardo Ballerini

Reluctant Poet, Inc. 2.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798228363151 $10.45
(also CD, MP3)

WHEN YOU SEE MY MOTHER, ASK HER TO DANCE: Poems

Joan Baez
Read by Joan Baez

Joan Baez fans of a certain age will cherish this sweeping collection of poems about her life, her friends, and her sensitive reactions to the world around her. Because this is a personal diary, only the author could have delivered this writing with such arresting impact. Baez's timbre may reveal her stage of life, but it expresses the gravitas you'd expect from one of the 1960s' most iconic singers and cultural pioneers. When quoting some of the notable people in her life—Leonard Cohen, Bob Dylan, and others—her use of accents is believable and dramatic. Even people new to Baez's life and music will resonate with her reflections, expressed here in poems that are appealingly demure or cryptic as they unfold the arc of the artist's life. *T.W.*

Blackstone Audio 2.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798228358614 $19.95
(also CD, MP3)
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798228358607 $34.95 (also CD)

Put Your Dukes Up

▶ Dukes seem to be everywhere lately! My initial impression was that these audiobooks were going to follow tried-and-true tropes. For example, I imagined narrators using haughty, distant voices to display the characters' wealth, power, and privilege. But, as Jane Austen has taught us, first impressions are not always correct.

In *Our Dear Miss H. Is on the Case*, narrator Marisa Calin navigates the limitations that a female archaeologist and a duke's heir with a physical disability face in London society. Calin's soft, velvety voice mirrors the diplomatic means the couple use to achieve hard-won independence. In *While the Duke Was Sleeping*, Della refuses to bow to society's expectations of a single woman as she carries out a difficult deception that is necessary for her to achieve financial stability. Yes, it's an homage to the Sandra Bullock movie. With taut pacing, narrator Esther Wane walks listeners through Della's shifting moral landscape, in which happiness always seems just out of reach. In *Earl Crush* and *A Gentleman's Gentleman*, the characters confront gender norms and class restrictions in historical settings with humor and heart. While historical fiction is always enlightening, these narrators pull back the curtain to let us time-travel through stories while reflecting on societal norms that still claim our attention today. Love your listening.—*Caitlin Augusta*

Find more Tease online at
audiofilemagazine.com/articles

THE DUKE AND LADY SCANDAL

Christy Carlyle
Read by Karen Cass

"I'm her biggest fan!"
—#1 New York Times Bestselling Author JULIA QUINN
USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR
CHRISTY CARLYLE
THE DUKE AND LADY SCANDAL
A Princes of London Romance

A Victorian adventure-romance proves entertaining, thanks to the vocal stylings of narrator Karen Cass. When antique store owner Alexandra Prince believes she's uncovered a plot to steal the Crown Jewels, she heads to Scotland Yard, where Detective Inspector Benedict Drake serves. As clues to the impending theft are gathered, romance develops. Cass supplies a measured, introspective narration with impressive clarity. She mirrors the author's respect for both characters' contributions to the investigation. Ben's voice is deeper, while Alexandra's is lighter and rippling. Cass also provides voices that vary in timbre and pitch for the other officers of Scotland Yard, Ben's sister, and Alexandra's acquaintances, which add to the audiobook's professional quality. Listeners will hope Cass delivers the rest of this new series. *C.A.*

Harper Audio 8.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9780063347359 $26.99

DUKE WITH A REPUTATION

Scarlett Scott
Read by Victoria Aston, Will Watt

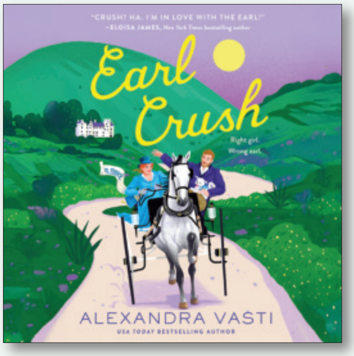
DUKE WITH A REPUTATION
WICKED DUKES SOCIETY
SCARLETT SCOTT
USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

A banquet of sensual delights awaits those who listen to this historical novel narrated by Will Watt and Victoria Aston. Watt portrays the Duke of Brandon, whose dissolute ways have earned him a reputation, an ultimatum to marry from his grandmother, and a daughter, Pandy. Watt's drawl drapes like the velvet folds of a Victorian cape, and he uses it as the Duke woos Lottie, Countess of Grenfell, whose dreadful first husband has left her deadset against marrying again. Aston's authoritative narration mirrors Lottie's resolve for a single life and captures her yearning for Brandon. Secondary characters receive due consideration, including Watt's miniature gremlin voice for naughty Pandy and Aston's deferential lady's maid voicing. For listeners who like historicals heavy on romance, this one triumphs. *C.A.*

Dreamscape 8.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781666688894 $27.32

EARL CRUSH

Alexandra Vasti
Read by Mhairi Morrison


"CRUSH? HA. I'M IN LOVE WITH THE EARL!"
—ELOISA JAMES, New York Times bestselling author
Earl Crush
Right girl. Wrong earl.
ALEXANDRA VASTI
USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

This delightful Regency romance introduces Lydia Hope-Wallace, the rich, fiery redhead who secretly writes pamphlets denouncing the excesses of the aristocracy. Arthur Baird is the tall, blond reclusive Earl of Strathrannoch, who owns a moldering castle in Scotland. Narrator Mhairi Morrison spins the pair's adventurous love story, beginning with her wonderful vocal interpretation of their first meeting. Lydia doesn't want to waste a minute and puts her marriage proposal on the table as she introduces herself. Morrison expertly enacts Arthur's shock and dismay because he has no idea who she is. Morrison's strong Scottish accent and comedic timing help create many laugh-out-loud moments. Her performance is humorous, breathlessly sexy, and not to be missed. *E.E.S.*

Dreamscape 12.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781666682366 $34.99

A GENTLEMAN'S GENTLEMAN

TJ Alexander
Read by Harrison Knights

A NOVEL
A Gentleman's Gentleman
TJ ALEXANDER

Harrison Knights narrates TJ Alexander's debut historical romance. Needing to keep up appearances while in London for the season, eccentric Lord Christopher Eden reluctantly hires James Harding as his valet. Knights captures Christopher's somewhat persnickety nature, as well as the aching loneliness that causes him to make deeply awkward overtures of friendship toward his new valet. In contrast, Knights gives James a somewhat sardonic tone, but his underlying devotion to his employer is always clear. As the two men tentatively establish their relationship, Knights's care with their emotional development is evident. The numerous secondary characters are also distinctly voiced. *K.M.P.*

Random House Audio 8.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798217018819 $22.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: ISBN 9798217018826 $76.00

OUR DEAR MISS H. IS ON THE CASE

Violet Marsh
Read by Marisa Calin

Our Dear Miss H. is on the Case
VIOLET MARSH

Narrator Marisa Calin shines a light on women's opportunities in this unconventional historical rom-com. Lady archaeologist Georgina Harrington doesn't back down from any challenge, and Calin's voice is imbued with her steely resolution. To locate her missing cousin, Georgina teams up with Alexander Lovett, heir to a dukedom, despite not being pleased that both their families are trying to manipulate them into marriage. Alexander has a club foot, and Calin captures the humor he uses to distract from his limitations, as well as his sincere support for Georgina's ambitions. Calin also voices peers and servants, even changing her pitch and timbre when Georgina assumes masculine garb and when vocalizing chickens in some hilarious high-society scenes. A lively and thoughtful listen. *C.A.*

Hachette Audio 10 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781668646458 $27.99

WHILE THE DUKE WAS SLEEPING

Samara Parish
Read by Esther Wane

While the Duke Was Sleeping
Samara Parish

Narrator Esther Wane provides an outsider perspective in this unconventional historical romance featuring a lady's maid who is posing as her mistress, the fiancée of an unconscious duke. Wane perpetuates Adelaide's deception in an elegant, textured voice with an ironic undertone, reflecting her many experiences traveling the world. Rhett, the duke's wastrel younger brother, has a deeper, raspy voice with elements of both humor and disillusionment. Rhett's three female siblings all have distinct voices in conversation, as does Lady Cordelia, the real fiancée. Wane conveys the story's tension as everyone waits for the duke to recover, while Rhett and Adelaide pine for a future together. The wistful quality of the narration creates a sense of longing that draws listeners into the story. *C.A.*

Dreamscape 9.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781666691788 $34.99

Romance Preview

DANICA NAVA
Love Is a War Song
Read by Kyla Garcia

A Native American singer's publicity misstep lands her back on her family's ranch in Oklahoma.

Contemporary

Penguin Audio Unabridged
Trade Ed.:
Release date: July 22

BECKY MONSON
Desperately Seeking Mr. Darcy
Read by Jamie Renell, Renee Dorian

A trip to a Jane Austen theme park could match Macey with her modern-day Darcy.

Contemporary

Dreamscape Unabridged
Trade Ed.:
Release date: July 22

ALLY CARTER
The Blonde Who Came in from the Cold
Read by Andrew Eiden, Emily Ellett

Two spies entangled in a mysterious plot aim for a second chance at love.

Suspense

Harper Audio Unabridged
Trade Ed.:
Release date: August 7

T. KINGFISHER
Hemlock & Silver
Read by Jennifer Pickens

A dark retelling of Snow White and the herbalist trying to save her.

Fantasy

Macmillan Audio Unabridged
Trade Ed.:
Release date: August 21

ROAN PARRISH
The Most Unusual Haunting of Edgar Lovejoy
Read by André Santana, Dani Martineck

Jamie designs haunted houses while ghosts constantly bedevil Edgar. Can their relationship go the distance?

Paranormal

Sourcebooks Unabridged
Trade Ed.:
Release date: September 9

THE UNQUIET GRAVE: DI Cormac Reilly, Book 4

Dervla McTiernan
Read by Aoife McMahon

Narrator Aoife McMahon returns to masterfully draw listeners into this multilayered police procedural featuring DI Cormac Reilly. In Ireland, it's not unusual for ancient bodies to surface in bogs—but this one is the victim of a recent murder. Reilly and his colleagues peel back layers of lies to uncover what happened, a task that is further complicated by a string of copycat killings. He's also distracted by his ex-girlfriend's plea to find her missing husband. In true McTiernan fashion, each storyline is driven by well-drawn characters and probing questions about justice and human nature. McMahon's skill in voicing distinct male and female characters enhances the drama and emotional tension. The result is a thoroughly immersive listening experience that will leave fans eager for the next Cormac Reilly installment. *E.Q.*

Bolinda Audio 12 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781038019882 $19.49

MURDER AT GULLS NEST

Jess Kidd
Read by Siobhan McSweeney

Siobhan McSweeney captures each nuance of this creepy yet moving mystery set in 1952 in a decaying English seaside town. Listeners meet Nora, who leaves a convent after 30 years to search for a young novice named Freda, whose letters to her have mysteriously stopped. The suspense begins as Nora moves into Freda's boardinghouse, where residents include a retired puppeteer, a resentful cook, and a carnival worker. McSweeney sounds determined as Nora subtly observes and questions the odd and secretive residents, who have varied accents and post-WWII memories. After an unexpected murder, suave Inspector Rideout—at first reluctantly, then enthusiastically—partners with Nora. The atmospheric weather, scenic promenade, and gentle humor, including religious wordplay, keep listeners fully involved. *S.G.B.*

Simon & Schuster Audio 10 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781797189031 $25.99

THE MAID'S SECRET: A Maid Novel

Nita Prose
Read by Lauren Ambrose

Lauren Ambrose continues her stellar performance of Nita Prose's quirky and heartwarming Molly the Maid series in the newest adventure of our favorite Regency Grand Hotel head maid and events coordinator. During an "Antiques Roadshow"-like event, Molly learns that her favorite trinket is actually a rare Fabergé egg. Soon, the precious keepsake is stolen. Molly launches an investigation that uncovers a mystery in her late Gran's diary. Told by Molly and Gran in alternating chapters, the story gives Ambrose scope to inhabit two dissimilar protagonists and a range of other characters. Molly's exacting tone and precise speech reveal her neurodivergence, while Gran's refined diary voice contrasts with Molly's renditions of Gran's aphorisms. In between, Ambrose keeps pace with Molly's grand adventure. *A.C.S.*

Random House Audio 11 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217065370 $22.50
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217065387 $76.00

THE BIG FIX: Jack Bergin, Book 2

John Mankiewicz, Jamie Napoli, Daniel Pyne, Katie Pyne, Aaron Lipstadt
Read by Jon Hamm, Ana de la Reguera, and a Full Cast

audible ORIGINAL
DODGERS COMING
Jon HAMM
Ana DE LA REGUERA
Omar EPPS
And Alia SHAWKAT
The BIG FIX
A JACK BERGIN MYSTERY
ONLY FROM audible

Listeners are treated to the rich audio experience of being immersed in the uproar of a 1950s community as major deals unfold to bring the Brooklyn Dodgers to Los Angeles. Jon Hamm returns to masterfully portray PI Jack Bergin in this second installment of the Audible series. He's joined by Ana de la Reguera as Lala Portal, Jack's ex and a classic femme fatale who is in desperate need of help. A full cast of talented narrators brings both male and female characters to life—some speaking Spanish—with standout performances throughout. Listeners will be immersed in a rich audio world filled with revving engines, flying punches, gunshots, bodies dropping, and even a woman speaking from inside an iron lung. The result is an entertaining noir layered with history and surround sound. *E.Q.*

Audible, Inc. 4.5 hrs. Audio Program
Trade Ed.: DD $24.95

An entertaining noir layered with history and surround sound.

THE MAN IN THE QUEUE: Inspector Alan Grant, Book 1

Josephine Tey
Read by Stefan Rudnicki

With his appealing baritone, Golden Voice Stefan Rudnicki draws listeners into this first outing of Inspector Alan Grant. An unidentified man is stabbed while waiting in a long line to see the final London performance of a popular musical comedy. Grant can't understand how none of the others in the queue saw anything. Nonetheless, he takes the few clues he has and begins his dogged investigation. Rudnicki's portrayals of Tey's characters work well. His voice demands attention, and his insights into both major and minor characters are first-rate. The book was first published in 1929, so Tey's Inspector Grant has no fancy forensics at his disposal. He solves the mystery just by employing intelligent detective work. *S.J.H.*

Blackstone Audio/ Skyboat Media 8.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798228395060 $22.95
(also CD, MP3)
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798228395053 $54.95
(also CD)

THE CASE OF THE MISSING MAID:
Harriet Morrow Investigates, Book 1
Rob Osler
Read by Nicol Zanzarella

Nicol Zanzarella splendidly captures 1890s Chicago and its diverse communities. Listeners meet 21-year-old "Harry" Morrow, who is delighted at being chosen to be the Prescott Agency's first female detective. After enduring prejudice from fellow detectives, Harry visits an elderly woman who claims her maid is missing. Colorful descriptions of buggies, meat plants, streets, and inclement weather enliven the story as Harry investigates on her trusty bicycle. When she meets Agnes's family, Zanzarella deftly provides some Polish phrases and accents. Gradually, Harry's detection skills lead her to enter the gay underground, seeking Agnes's captor. Family life, baked goodies, and phrases such as "unhand me" add a vintage atmosphere. Audio enhances Zanzarella's luminous segues from quiet reactions to life-or-death action, making for a compelling listen. *S.G.B.*

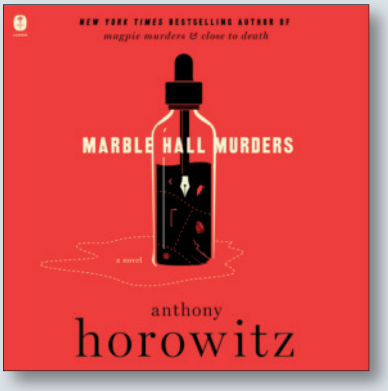
Tantor Media 9.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798331911942 $19.99
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798331911959 $47.95

THE IMPOSSIBLE THING
Belinda Bauer
Read by Phil Dunster

Phil Dunster's narration draws listeners into this mystery revolving around the now illegal collection of birds' eggs. The story is based in Yorkshire, England, in the 1920s and then jumps to current times. Listeners follow the journey of a rare egg that is found by a girl who risks her life by joining the many men who are precariously dangled over the edges of cliffs to obtain guillemot eggs. One hundred years later in Wales, this same type of egg draws friends Patrick and Nick into danger. Dunster's strong narration and use of rich northern English and Welsh accents create the perfect backdrop for this story. His characterizations help listeners differentiate the two timelines, and his portrayals of Patrick and Nick ensure their likability. *K.J.P.*

Dreamscape 8.25 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781666690163 $34.99

MARBLE HALL MURDERS
Anthony Horowitz
Read by Lesley Manville, Tim McMullan


NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
magpie murders & close to death
MARBLE HALL MURDERS
a novel
anthony
horowitz

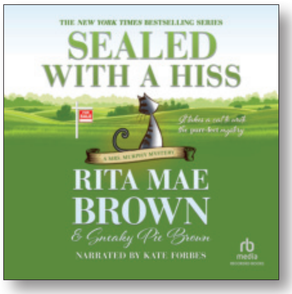
Talented actors Lesley Manville and Tim McMullan bring drama and rich characterizations to their narration, just as they do in the Masterpiece television adaptations of Horowitz's series. Their dynamic performances create an audiobook experience that's fun, immersive, and expertly voiced. Though this may be the final installment, ample backstory allows new listeners to jump right in. Freelance editor Susan Ryeland returns to London to edit a continuation of the Atticus Pünd series. Author Eliot Crace is brought in to replace the murdered creator of the originals. What follows is a multilayered metafictional mystery filled with twists, anagrams, and clever clues connecting a decades-old death to the new unfinished manuscript. Manville and McMullan are in perfect step with the intricate plot, making this a thoroughly entertaining listen. *E.Q.*

Harper Audio 17.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9780063305720 $23.99

A thoroughly entertaining listen.

SEALED WITH A HISS:
Mrs. Murphy, Book 33
Rita Mae Brown, Sneaky Pie Brown
Read by Kate Forbes

Kate Forbes narrates this chatty down-home tale in a raspy voice that reflects the ages, backgrounds, and personalities of the characters—whether they're feline, canine, human, or even an intrepid mouse with a squeaky voice. For decades, fans of Rita Mae Brown's cozy mysteries have followed "Harry" Haristeen and her buddies, both human and animal. Together, the characters solve murders, gossip, and engage in community celebrations in the little town of Crozet, Virginia. In this 33rd novel in the series, two bodies—one old and one recent—baffle investigators. This audiobook will be popular with followers of the series who want to know how the good folks of Crozet are getting on. *D.L.G.*



Recorded Books 7.75 hrs. Unabridged
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798892733014 $20.99
(also CD, MP3)

RED ULTIMATUM:
The Red Hotel, Book 4
Gary Grossman, Edwin Fuller
Read by P.J. Ochlan

P.J. Ochlan narrates the fourth novel in the Red Hotel series. Dan Reilly, former CIA operative/hotel executive, becomes involved in political intrigue and danger when Russian President Gorshkov implements a multifaceted plan to attack the U.S. With his uncanny ability to slip into many accents, Ochlan takes listeners across countries and continents while ratcheting up relentless action that includes deaths, missile strikes, and kidnappings. He fully develops each character, incorporating low, menacing growls for the villains and quiet self-assurance for the heroes—regardless of gender. Ochlan excels at keeping his narrative foot on the gas. *L.M.G.*

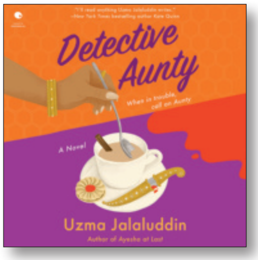
Beaufort Books 13.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD $24.95

THE QUEENS OF CRIME

Marie Benedict
Read by Bessie Carter

Keeping track of the wide range of accents of a cast of characters from multiple countries—New Zealand, London, France, and Hungary, to name a few—is a daunting task. English actor Bessie Carter does just that in this delightful crumpet of historical fiction. Carter employs her best BBC English for famed mystery author Dorothy L. Sayers, who spearheads the effort to form a secret society of the greatest female crime writers of all time, including Agatha Christie, Ngaio Marsh, Margery Allingham, and Baroness Emma Orczy. Determined to secure their status alongside their male counterparts in London's prestigious Detection Club, the "queens" travel to France to solve a real-life murder. Carter's subtle changes in tone foster a growing sense of intrigue as the plot thickens. *E.E.*

Macmillan Audio 10.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781250379023 $26.99
(also CD)



DETECTIVE AUNTY

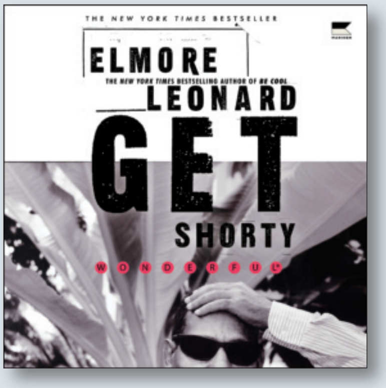
Uzma Jalaluddin
Read by Deepti Gupti

Deepti Gupti infuses a lyrical cadence into the dialogue of this touching cozy mystery. Kausar has always had strong intuition, along with the ability to read people. Over time, she's hidden these skills for fear of others finding them intrusive. Now, her strengths are vital as she seeks to clear her daughter's name after she's been accused of murder. Having spent much of her life defined by her role as a wife and mother, recently widowed Kausar finds a renewed purpose in her daughter's time of need. Gupti skillfully shifts between Indian and Canadian accents, and her nuanced delivery reflects Kausar's emotional intelligence. From the authoritative tones of the police to the snappish tones of suspects and Kausar's light intonation, Gupti's performance portrays many emotions. *A.L.C.*

Harper Audio 11 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9780063434899 $27.99

GET SHORTY:
Chili Palmer, Book 1

Elmore Leonard
Read by Joe Mantegna


THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
ELMORE LEONARD
THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF BE COOL
GET SHORTY
WONDERFUL

Joe Mantegna's calm, resonant voice conveys authority with minimal effort. It's the ideal voice for Chili Palmer, a loan shark who eschews violence when recovering debts. Palmer has fallen in with several morally ambiguous Hollywood types, including Harry Zim, the producer of B-movie exploitation flicks; the Bear, a former stuntman; and Bo Catlett, a drug-dealing movie investor. All of them seek to produce the next Hollywood blockbuster. The audiobook's plot revolves around the movie script that Chili is pitching, which, coincidentally, is about a loan shark. The result is a recursive script exploring Chili's life in Hollywood that finds its ending only when he resolves his real-life dilemma with Catlett. This excellent production, with its ideal narrator, is just in time for Leonard's centennial celebration in October 2025. *R.W.S.*

Harper Audio 8.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9780063452763 $27.99

Mantegna is the ideal voice for Chili Palmer.

10 MARCHFIELD SQUARE

Nicola Whyte
Read by Nneka Okoye

Nneka Okoye's spirited performance brings out all of the humor, drama, and sentiment that overtakes Marchfield Square when a thoroughly disliked tenant is murdered in Number 10. The landlord, an elderly heiress, has no faith in the police, so she employs two of her tenants—Audrey, her cleaner, who knows everyone in the Square, and Lewis, a reclusive, struggling crime novelist—to discover whodunit. The cast is large and diverse, and Okoye distinguishes them from one another with subtle changes in pitch and pacing, as well as distinct accents. Listeners are treated to the full array of the narrator's gifts in this well-characterized cozy mystery debut. The ending hints that we may hear more from Audrey and Lewis—and, we hope, Okoye. *S.G.*

Dreamscape 10.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781666694246 $34.99

ALIBIS: Alibis Collection

Wanda M. Morris, Sally Hepworth,
Chris Bohjalian, David Lagercrantz,
Chad Zunker, Freida McFadden
Read by Pete Simonelli, Soneela Nankani,
Graham Halstead, Anthea Greco,
Susannah Jones, Lauryn Allman,
Amara Jasper, Eric Altheide

Taking "alibis" as their inspiration, the six talented authors of this audiobook provide listeners with unique stories ranging from a woman who is on death row to a celebrity chef who is found dead in his freezer. Each story unfolds like a novella in multiple chapters. The narrators are well matched to the characters and settings, and bring the suspenseful plots to life. Each story is performed by one narrator, the exception being Chris Bohjalian's "The Skydive," narrated by Eric Altheide, Soneela Nankani, and Pete Simonelli. A standout is "The Ex-Wives Club" by Sally Hepworth, performed by Anthea Greco, who voices women of all ages. The stories have multiple layers, unexpected twists, and performances that will keep listeners engaged from start to finish. *E.Q.*

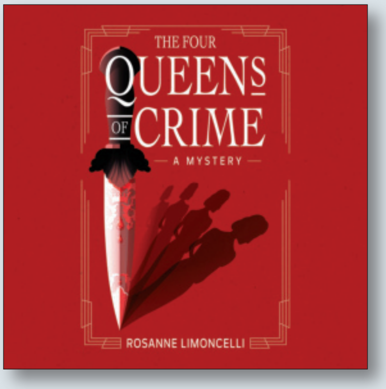
Brilliance Audio 8 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781511354653 $24.99

FINLAY DONOVAN DIGS HER OWN GRAVE: Finlay Donovan, Book 5
Elle Cosimano
Read by Angela Dawe

Angela Dawe brings Finlay Donovan's comedic crime solving to life with her narration of the fifth book in this series. When a body is discovered in a neighbor's backyard and Finlay's husband is arrested, Finlay and her nanny become involved. The nosy neighbor, Mrs. Heggarty, moves into Finlay's house and busies herself with her duties as head of the neighborhood watch. Does she know more than she's admitting? Dawe is simply amazing at creating different personalities with the power of her voice. No-nonsense Mrs. Heggarty has a scratchy voice, Finlay's young daughter sounds high-pitched and innocent, a teen has a laid-back vibe, and Finlay's boyfriend, a handsome cop, has a voice like melted chocolate. Dawe paints pictures that amplify the listening experience. *L.M.G.*

Macmillan Audio 9.25 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781250384898 $26.99
Macmillan Audio
Library Ed.: ISBN 9781250418098 $74.99

THE FOUR QUEENS OF CRIME
Rosanne Limoncelli
Read by Elizabeth Knowelden



Sparkling wit, ingenious plotting, and a superb performance by Elizabeth Knowelden make this debut novel a listening joy. As WWII threatens, a fundraising gala for the Women's Voluntary Service is held at Sir Henry Heathcote's manor. The period's four most popular mystery novelists, Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers, Ngaio Marsh, and Margery Allingham, act as hosts. All goes well until the morning after the ball, when Sir Henry is found murdered. The first real-life female detective, DCI Lilian Wyles of Scotland Yard, accepts help from the four writers. Knowelden is outstanding as each "queen" offers her opinion. Knowelden's voices and accents are flawless. She highlights aspects of each writer's methods, dropping subtly placed red herrings seamlessly. Knowelden makes this absolutely delightful listening. *S.J.H.*

Random House Audio 9 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798217082414 $22.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: ISBN 9798217082421 $66.50

> *Knowelden makes this absolutely delightful listening.*

HEARTWOOD
Amity Gaige
Read by Justine Lupe, Alma Cuervo, Rebecca Lowman, Ali Andre Ali, Cary Hite, Helen Laser

A full cast tells the story of missing hiker Valerie Gillis and the extensive search to bring her home. When 42-year-old Valerie Gillis goes missing from the Appalachian Trail in Maine, game warden Beverly jumps into action to bring her home. Hundreds of miles away, an elderly woman named Lena begins to piece together what may have happened to Valerie, based on the strange behavior of an online friend. Narrators Justine Lupe, Alma Cuervo, Rebecca Lowman, Ali Andre Ali, Cary Hite, and Helen Laser each provide distinct character work that makes listening to this novel seem like listening to a true-crime podcast as Valerie's emotional journal entries keep the listener on edge. *V.B.*

Simon & Schuster Audio 8.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781668111444 $24.99

THE MARGARET CODE
Richard Hooton
Read by Maggie Ollerenshaw

Narrator Maggie Ollerenshaw is perfectly matched to 89-year-old Margaret Winterbottom in this debut mystery. Listeners quickly learn that Margaret is an unreliable source of information—not out of malice, but due to frustrating memory gaps. She joins her teenage grandson, James, to uncover who murdered her neighbor and dear friend, Barbara. Ollerenshaw skillfully differentiates male and female characters, capturing teenaged James with authenticity. Listeners are introduced to Margaret's family and to the secrets she keeps in a Victorian wooden box. Throughout, it becomes clear that Margaret isn't telling her story to the listener, but rather to her beloved late husband. Ollerenshaw's steady pacing and emotional depth convey the quiet heartbreaks of aging. A touching mystery with humor, pathos, and grace—beautifully performed. *E.Q.*

Hachette Audio 12.25 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781668653128 $31.99

THEY ALL FALL THE SAME
Wes Browne
Read by Matt Godfrey

Narrator Matt Godfrey evokes a dark mood in this Appalachian thriller set in Eastern Kentucky. Burl Spoon is an organized crime boss who has built his business empire by becoming the top cannabis seller in Jackson County. Spoon thinks he has everything under control, but when his daughter relapses into drug addiction and goes missing, Spoon's world is turned upside down. Godfrey delivers the perfect Kentucky accent and has excellent attention to detail regarding place names and turns of phrase. This makes his dialogue stand out and helps create complex portrayals of all of the characters. His performance maintains the tension throughout the story. *K.D.W.*

Dreamscape 8 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781666678833 $34.99

PODCAST EPISODE

Listen to an audio review at audiofilemagazine.com/podcast

THE FIRST GENTLEMAN

James Patterson, Bill Clinton
Read by Aja Naomi King, Saskia Maarleveld, Will Collyer, James Fouhey

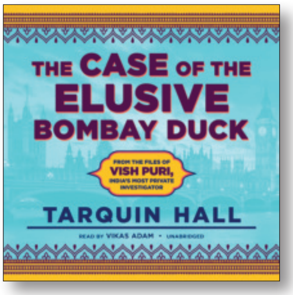
The latest political thriller by Bill Clinton and James Patterson comes alive through the dynamic performances of a skilled team of narrators. The plot revolves around First Gentleman Cole Wright, who is on trial for the unsolved murder of a New England Patriots cheerleader during his days as an NFL star. Spanning the years between the crime and the trial, the story follows journalists Brea Cooke and Garrett Wilson, who are both convinced of Wright's guilt. Narrators Aja Naomi King, Saskia Maarleveld, Will Collyer, and James Fouhey deliver strong, distinctive performances, working seamlessly together. King's portrayal of Brea—intelligent, inquisitive, and emotionally grounded—stands out and gives the audiobook its compelling heart. *D.J.S.*

Hachette Audio 11 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781668648247 $27.99

THE CASE OF THE ELUSIVE BOMBAY DUCK: Vish Paul, Book 6

Tarquin Hall
Read by Vikas Adam

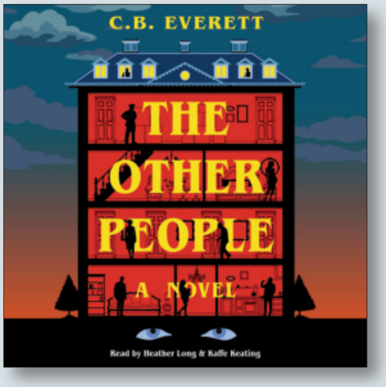
India's most private detective, Vish Puri, heads to London to accept the International Detective of the Year award. He's accompanied by his wife and mother. Plans soon go awry as Puri finds himself and his nephew, Jags, embroiled in the hunt for the Bombay Duck, a billionaire swindler, at the request of a top government official. Vikas Adam brings Puri and his family alive with aplomb, successfully creating believable characters, including the women. He particularly excels at delivering dialogue ranging from Puri's rich Indian intonation to Jags's London teen speak. He also highlights the humor peppered throughout the mystery. The result is an amusing listen. *K.J.P.*


THE CASE OF THE ELUSIVE BOMBAY DUCK
FROM THE FILES OF VISH PURI, INDIA'S MOST PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR
TARQUIN HALL
READ BY VIKAS ADAM • UNABRIDGED

Blackstone Audio 8 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781094081687 $19.95
(also CD, MP3)
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9781094081670 $47.95
(also CD)

THE OTHER PEOPLE

C.B. Everett
Read by Heather Long, Kaffe Keating



Kaffe Keating and Heather Long give masterful performances of Everett's debut thriller about 10 strangers who have been kidnapped and brought to a mysterious house. Keating's and Long's nimble narration of strangers who range from an arrogant army captain to an ornery, lonely woman and a young single mom with an infant daughter is full-bodied and keeps listeners invested. Keating is especially adept at his portrayal of "the Beast," the listeners' guide to the murders and other disruptive events that occur. Long embodies the horrors of grief, guilt, and death with impeccable precision. Listeners will appreciate Everett's nod to Agatha Christie's renowned work *And Then There Were None*. *P.P.C.*

Simon & Schuster Audio Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781668109465 $26.99

Masterful performances.

NIGHTSHADE

Michael Connelly
Read by Will Damron

Narrator Will Damron introduces listeners to Michael Connelly's newest character, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Detective Stilwell. Damron skillfully delivers this police procedural, rich with the detail, atmosphere, and character depth that we expect from Connelly. What sets this story apart from most of Connelly's others is its setting, Catalina Island, where police patrol in electric carts and mainland officers are exiled. Stilwell's strained relationships with former colleagues resurface as he investigates a murder, an animal sacrifice, and high-level corruption. Damron masterfully differentiates the male characters, good and evil, while also convincingly voicing the female roles. His performance contributes to the tension and intrigue. The result is an absorbing, entertaining listen and a strong start to what promises to be a compelling new series. *E.Q.*

Hachette Audio 9 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781668650592 $27.99

RUTH RUN

Elizabeth Kaufman
Read by Dan Bittner, Rebecca Lowman

Narrators Dan Bittner and Rebecca Lowman step flawlessly into the characters of Mike and Ruth in this digital-age thriller. Through Mike's and Ruth's alternating chapters, we follow Ruth, a 20-something hacker, as she flees Mike and other government agents who want to recruit her skills. Bittner convincingly portrays Mike in a boy-next-door tone, subtly exposing his self-delusion. Lowman delivers a sympathetic, smart, and brave Ruth, who is forced into increasingly threatening situations. Like Ruth, listeners must constantly question whom to trust as her escape forces alliances with dubious partners. Bittner's and Lowman's performances create a tense atmosphere that keeps listeners hooked. The result is a fast-paced listen perfect for fans of high-stakes digital intrigue in the age of cybercrime. *E.Q.*

Penguin Audio 7.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217021413 $20.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217021420 $76.00

KING OF ASHES

S.A. Cosby
Read by Adam Lazarre-White

Narrator Adam Lazarre-White once again immerses listeners in a dark, complex world crafted by S.A. Cosby. This gripping story explores identity, justice, and long-buried family trauma. When Roman Carruthers returns to his hometown to care for his dying father and support his sister, he's drawn into rescuing his troubled brother. As past and present collide, the mystery of their mother's decades-old disappearance resurfaces. Lazarre-White masterfully voices a wide range of characters—male and female—capturing both external conflict and internal turmoil with emotional depth. His pacing and tone elevate Cosby's evocative prose, especially the vivid metaphors and raw dialogue. Listeners will be captivated by the layered storytelling, morally complex characters, and the powerful interpretation of a narrative steeped in pain, violence, and family loyalty. *E.Q.*

Macmillan Audio 13.25 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781250395030 $26.99

NEVER FLINCH: Holly Gibney, Book 4

Stephen King
Read by Jessie Mueller, Stephen King [Afterword]

STEPHEN KING
READ BY JESSIE MUELLER with an afterword read by the author
NEVER FLINCH
A NOVEL

Jessie Mueller provides a rich, satisfying performance that should please fans of King's audiobooks, particularly his most recent works. By now, King has fully embraced the detective genre. Private investigator Holly Gibney is back—with her dizzying intellect, ability to think through tough cases, and relatable quirks. The story is a revenge plot that has the murderer announcing to law enforcement a plan to kill "13 guilty and one innocent." Along the way, Gibney hits the road, serving as protection for a famous women's rights activist who also attracts credible, dangerous threats. Mueller fully embodies the many diverse voices that make up Gibney's world of the Finders Keepers detective agency, including characters who break into song. Mueller's tone embraces the mounting tension. *S.P.C.*

Simon & Schuster Audio 14.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781668131640 $29.99 (also CD)

Jessie Mueller provides a rich, satisfying performance.

THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES' CAT: The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes' Cat, Book 1

Patricia Srigley
Read by James Meunier

James Meunier perfectly conveys these agreeable adventures, which will appeal to cat lovers and playful Sherlock Holmes fans. Listeners meet an outraged Holmes as he rescues a black cat from a beating. Since Dr. Watson has married and left 221B Baker Street, Holmes happily adopts "Cat Watson." Chapters are told from Holmes's and Cat Watson's viewpoints and demonstrate Cat's skills using claws and stealth to discover that Mrs. Watson is a crime boss. Cat Watson and Holmes also join Dr. Watson to solve a mystery involving toilet inventor Harry Crapper. Meunier skillfully reveals plentiful surprises, including references to original Holmes stories. A humbler Holmes and his improving views of women add delight. Audio demonstrates how well author Srigley and narrator Meunier succeed in a sea of Holmes wannabes, surpassing most attempts. *S.G.B.*

SrigleyArts, WigglesWorth Press 9 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD $19.95

THE PANGAEA SOLUTION: Solve the Equation, Save the World (David Blum, Book 1)

Charles Jacobs
Read by Dion Graham

Dion Graham narrates a taut thriller in which a banker digs into the truth behind his father's death—only to uncover a terrorist conspiracy. The news of his father's heart attack shocks David; then he discovers a note claiming the death wasn't due to natural causes. Graham imbues David with an earnest tone even as the story ramps up into a bombastic roller-coaster ride. A mad scientist hopes to unleash a horrifying biomedical weapon, and David races to stop it. Graham shifts among characters, delivering emotive performances that capture a gamut of heartfelt emotions. Overall, Graham's portrayal conjures a captivating leading man in a blockbuster movie. *J.M.M.*

CHARLES JACOBS
THE PANGAEA SOLUTION
A DAVID BLUM THRILLER

Charles Jacobs 9.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781965253359 $19.95

HOUSTON NOIR

Gwendolyn Zepeda [Ed.]
Read by Jamie K. Brown, Diana Bustelo, Reena Dutt, Gwendolyn Zepeda, Teri Schnaubelt, Victoria Villareal, Mirron Willis

Whew, there's a lot going on in this work, which tells tawdry tales of the city of Houston, reported and written by a host of locally famous authors and performed by a talented ensemble of narrators. Some stories are longer than others, but all seem to be as long as they need to be. The many different performers do an excellent job, though the collection would be better served if each story's author and narrator were announced. All in all, the narrators do topnotch work; each performance is powerful in its own way. The 14 stories about murder, homelessness, betrayal, and many other topics take place in a small section of the city. The common element is the sincerity of the authors and the performers. It's clearly a labor of love all around. *M.S.*

Ground Cherry Press 8 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD $19.95

In the Studio: *Kaua‘i Storm*

***AudioFile* spoke with author and narrator Tori Eldridge and director Jennifer Aquino about working together remotely to record Tori's mystery novel *Kaua‘i Storm*.**

AudioFile: Tori, you have an acting as well as a writing background, but was this your first time behind the microphone to record an audiobook—and your own audiobook at that? What was that experience like for you?

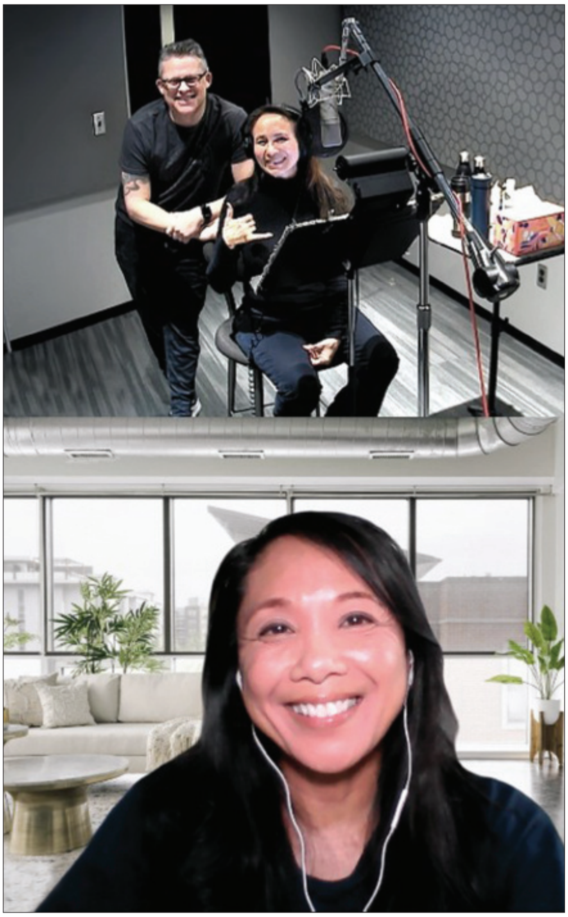
Tori Eldridge: In addition to on-camera work, I had also performed numerous voiceovers for television and film. Recording studios were my happy place as an actor and a singer, but although I had recorded many excerpts of my fiction for podcasts and such, this was my first time I had ever recorded the narration for an audiobook.

Performing the words and dialogue I had created felt like coming home, as if I was truly bringing *Kaua‘i Storm* to life. I had lived with Makalani, her family, and the other characters for years. I had enacted their dialogue—in character—during every stage of my writing process. I knew who they were. I knew how they spoke. And I knew how the ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i (Native Hawaiian language) and Hawaiian Pidgin English I had integrated into my story should sound.

AF: Jennifer, in addition to your own work as an actor and narrator, you are a director—can you share with us how you worked with Tori to direct the audiobook recording?

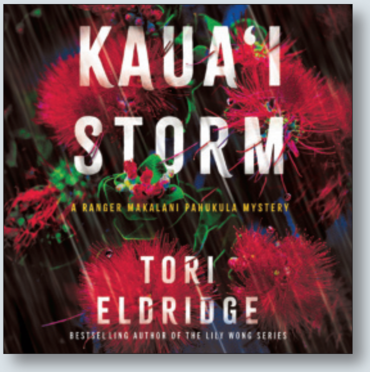
Jennifer Aquino: I directed Tori in her performance, and David Andrews at Brilliance Publishing produced the audiobook. One of the first things I love to do when directing an actor is to have a short prep call before the first day of recording. It's a great way to get to know each other and to get on the same page before recording starts. Fortunately, Tori and I already knew each other; I had narrated her short story version of *Kaua‘i Storm*, titled "Missing on Kaua‘i," so we connected then, and it was wonderful that I was already familiar with Makalani's story in *Kaua‘i Storm*.

During our prep session, and because this was Tori's first time performing an audiobook, I wanted to let her know what my role was as her director, and that's to support her and guide her in her pacing and performance, to answer any questions she might have, and to help bring out the best performance from her while staying true to the story and her intentions as the author.



(above) Author Tori Eldridge in the studio, (top right) Tori and Josh Millman, (bottom right) director Jennifer Aquino

KAUA'I STORM:
Ranger Makalani Pahukula, Book 1
Tori Eldridge
Read by Tori Eldridge


KAUA'I STORM
A RANGER MAKALANI PAHUKULA MYSTERY
TORI ELDRIDGE
BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF THE LILY WONG SERIES

Author and narrator Tori Eldridge invites listeners into an entertaining and enlightening new series featuring Ranger Makalani Pahukula. Drawing on her background in acting and her Hawaiian, Chinese, and Norwegian heritage, Eldridge brings depth and authenticity to both her storytelling and narration. Her knowledge of Hawaii's culture, language, spiritual beliefs, and customs enriches the story, offering listeners a vivid window into Kaua'i life. Ranger Makalani, currently stationed at Crater Lake Park in Oregon, returns home to Kaua'i for a family celebration, only to become entangled in the mysterious disappearance of her two cousins. Eldridge's engaging performance and immersive writing ensure that listeners remain captivated from beginning to end—and eager for the next installment in this promising series. *E.Q.*

Brilliance Audio 13.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781511349710 $42.99

Eldridge brings depth and authenticity to both her storytelling and narration.

I informed her what it would be like going into the studio, so she knew what to expect. I suggested that she practice every day, reading excerpts from her book out loud. Since we were going to do what's called a punch record, I explained what that was, and I suggested that she practice reading out loud that way. So whenever she made a mistake, I told her to simply pause, go back to the beginning of that sentence, and continue reading.

We also discussed characters and character differentiation. Having created all the characters, it was easy for Tori to differentiate them since she knew all the characters so well. I was there to support her in the consistency of the characters' voices. Tori also knew all the Hawaiian pronunciations, and since I'm also familiar with Hawaiian pronunciations, I was able to support her with consistency.

All this prep work helped make our recording sessions go smoothly. Tori was so easy to work with, she was open to my direction, and she took my direction well. And most importantly, we had fun!

AF: Tori, what did you learn about narrating from working with Jennifer?

TE: Working with Jennifer during my 10-day rehearsal period was a master class in audiobook narration. As an on-camera actress herself, Jennifer understood the nuanced differences I would need to address. By critiquing the rehearsal chapters I had chosen to send, she coached me to narrate more intimately and speak more slowly than I ever would have on my own.

She also coached me to maintain a relatively constant volume despite narrating internal thoughts or "shouting" dialogue. As a singer, I could move closer or farther away from a microphone when hitting higher or louder notes. With narration, the differences needed to be conveyed more with the quality rather than the volume of my voice. Jennifer significantly improved my performance of internalized thoughts.

And she prepared me for the technical side of audiobook narration: pausing (without comment) whenever I made a mistake, leaving a slight pause between characters in dialogue, raising my inflection and slowing down when speaking Hawaiian or other words my listeners might not understand, taking care not to rustle my body or make sounds with my mouth. She also supplied me with a spreadsheet to make notations and keep track of the 48 characters I would need to voice.

By the time I entered my sound booth, my voice was in shape, and I felt completely prepared.

AF: Tori, can you share with us some of your inspiration for writing *Kaua'i Storm*? When can we look forward to the next audiobook in the series? And will you return to narrate it?

TE: After five published novels, I finally felt ready to write about home. I had paid homage to the Chinese and Norwegian sides of my heritage in my Lily Wong thriller series. Now that I was a tūtū (grandma) to Moana and soon to Nahele, I felt the kuleana (responsibility) to deepen my connection and expand my knowledge about our Native Hawaiian ancestry, history, and traditions. But I'm also a mystery thriller writer, so I wanted to infuse that authenticity into an entertaining form of fiction that would universally excite, resonate, and appeal.

It's my hope that readers and listeners will come away from *Kaua'i Storm* with a renewed aloha for Hawai'i and a greater understanding of the challenges kanaka maoli (Native Hawaiians) living in Hawai'i are struggling with today.

My next Ranger Makalani Pahukula mystery will take my listeners to Hawai'i Island and a paniolo (Hawaiian cowboy) ranch! I'm in the editorial process now, and imagine the audiobook will be published in the spring of 2026. After the lovely *AudioFile* Magazine review, it is my fervent hope that Brilliance Publishing will hire me to narrate that audiobook as well. I look forward to working with Jennifer, David, and our engineer, Josh Millman, once again at the fabulous Digital One! ■

I REGRET ALMOST EVERYTHING: A Memoir
Keith McNally
Read by Richard E. Grant

Richard E. Grant showcases the compelling life of legendary restaurateur Keith McNally, who does not shy away from the complicated stories that make up his life and choices. Having started out in the film industry, McNally discovered true theater in building successful restaurants, including New York's Balthazar, where the right environment and staff made the perfect dining experience. Then, a debilitating stroke made speaking almost impossible. Happily, Grant brings a commanding narration to the proceedings. His timing, along with his eloquently dry delivery, is masterful. Grant's narrative skill is on full display as McNally shares his professional failures and personal struggles, including a suicide attempt and fractured relationships with his family. Throughout, Grant's performance is spellbinding. *S.P.C.*

"THE RESTAURATEUR WHO INVENTED DOWNTOWN." —The New York Times
I Regret Almost Everything
A MEMOIR
READ BY RICHARD E. GRANT
Keith McNally

Simon & Schuster Audio 11 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781797188614 $25.99

HOW TO LOSE YOUR MOTHER
A Daughter's Memoir
Molly Jong-Fast
Read by Molly Jong-Fast

This deeply personal and powerful memoir, though witty and snarky, has a bittersweet tone and an often self-critical pose. Political journalist and TV commentator Jong-Fast is a hyper-aware writer whose famous mother, Erica Jong, the author of *Fear of Flying*, was a narcissistic drunk with little time for her daughter. In this meditation on fame, Jong-Fast explores midlife exigencies and takes a clear-eyed look at her own alcoholism—she's been sober for 26 years. She details the fraught year 2023, when she put her mom with dementia and stepdad with Parkinson's into a nursing home and her husband contracted cancer, requiring extensive surgery. While her plaintive voice takes a little getting used to, listeners should persevere. She narrates with raw emotion, intense passion, and a propelling pace. *A.D.M.*

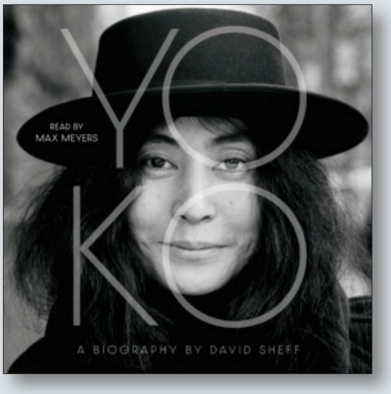
Penguin Audio 7 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798217071999 $20.00

MARSHA: The Joy and Defiance of Marsha P. Johnson
Tourmaline
Read by Tourmaline

Author and narrator Tourmaline invites listeners inside her warm and revealing biography of Marsha P. Johnson, an LGBTQIA+ icon, Black trans activist, and irrepressible spirit. In a deliberate, earnest performance, she explores the pivotal 1969 Stonewall Uprising in New York City, one of many key moments in Johnson's eventful life. Tourmaline adds vibrancy to quotations from Johnson and her friends and family as we hear about the early 1970s Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries, her compassionate caregiving throughout the 1980s HIV/AIDS health crisis, and her passion for stage productions. There's something special about Tourmaline narrating this production. She adds an extra layer of intimacy as she unpacks her own connection to Johnson's impactful contributions to the LGBTQIA+ community and advocacy movements. *J.R.T.*

Penguin Audio 10.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798217019939 $22.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: ISBN 9798217019946 $85.50

YOKO
David Sheff
Read by Max Meyers



Max Meyers's performance of Yoko Ono's biography works because it's done with a reporter's professionalism—minus the invisible eye rolls. The audiobook offers an insightful examination of the controversial woman John Lennon not only loved but also respected as an artist. Born to a wealthy but loveless Japanese family, she found her life shattered when Japan was devastated by American atomic bombs during WWII, events that colored her entire life. What comes across in the audiobook is that Yoko and John existed on a different plane than most of us do. What some hear as Yoko's howling and caterwauling, they heard as music. We can better understand her motivation and her unusual forms of art, much of which was so cryptic as to be understood only by her and John. *M.S.*

Simon & Schuster Audio 11 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781797189543 $25.99

An insightful examination.

MAKING THE BEST OF WHAT'S LEFT: When We're Too Old to Get the Chairs Reupholstered
Judith Viorst
Read by Judith Viorst

Listening to bestselling author Judith Viorst narrate her own stories and poems—and share tales from others about life in the "final fifth"—is a special experience. Listeners will appreciate the bittersweet humor and candid reflections on the ups and downs of life in one's 90s. Viorst shares her own journey, including moving from the home where she raised her children to a retirement community and, most poignantly, the heartbreak of losing her beloved spouse. Her voice is perfectly suited to exploring both the joys of the happiness curve and the challenges of aging, including the body's frailty. Viorst speaks with warmth, honesty, and wit, making this an engaging, touching listen. It's a celebration of resilience, memory, and meaning—rich with life's final lessons. *E.Q.*

Simon & Schuster Audio 4.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781668114353 $17.99

ORDINARY TIME: Lessons Learned While Staying Put

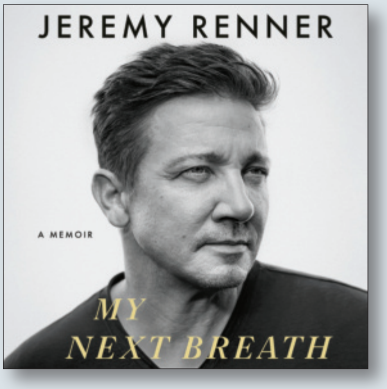
Annie B. Jones,
Emily P. Freeman [Fore.]
Read by Annie B. Jones,
Emily P. Freeman [Fore.]

Annie B. Jones shines as she narrates her first book, an essay collection about all the ways an ordinary life can feel extraordinary. An independent bookstore owner and host of the popular podcast "From the Front Porch," Jones narrates with confidence, a lively intonation, and expert pacing. The Florida native has a sweet voice with an audible smile that welcomes listeners into her life. As she considers all the times she has stayed put—in her small town, her long marriage, and her career as a bookstore owner—she tells thoughtful, often funny anecdotes that explore what makes life meaningful. Her stories about the times she's decided to leave—her hometown and her childhood faith are the big ones—are equally compelling. The result is an audiobook to treasure. *A.C.S.*

Harper Audio 6 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9780063411302 $27.99

MY NEXT BREATH: A Memoir

Jeremy Renner
Read by Jeremy Renner



Actor Jeremy Renner narrates his memoir about the horrendous injuries he suffered on New Year's Day 2023. In a freak accident, he was run over by his 14,000-pound Sno-Cat, a vehicle used to groom snowy and icy surfaces. Neither his prose nor his narration is stellar; he uses street language, occasionally pauses mid-sentence, and runs words together at ends of sentences. However, his effort is sensitive and moving as he describes the support he received from loved ones and many others as he made a truly miraculous recovery. With audible emotion Renner navigates his reflections on life and death. He makes clear his desire to help others who are experiencing daunting challenges. Enhancing the audio are the original 911 interactions as the accident unfolded. *W.A.G.*

Macmillan Audio 6.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781250395757 $19.99
Library Ed.: ISBN 9781250419781 $69.99

Sensitive and moving.

WHEN THE GOING WAS GOOD: An Editor's Adventures During the Last Golden Age of Magazines

Graydon Carter
Read by Graydon Carter, James Fox

Narrating his audiobook, author Graydon Carter devotes several chapters to his early years, beginning in Toronto and ending with college in Ottawa. Though his accent is subtle, there's no doubt that those formative years in Canada had a profound impact on him and his career. He credits his parents with teaching him values, his Canadian education with honing his editorial skills, and his modest upbringing with making him appreciate his subsequent life and career, first at *Time*, then *Spy*, then 25 years as editor of *Vanity Fair*. While at *Vanity Fair*, he dined with celebrities like Mike Nichols and Joan Didion, jousted with brand names like Trump and Polanski, and attended Met Galas and Oscar ceremonies. His voice is wonderfully conversational—it feels as if he's speaking directly to listeners. *L.W.S.*

Penguin Audio 12.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9780593944370 $25.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: ISBN 9780593944387 $95.00

FREEDOM: Memories 1954 - 2021

Angela Merkel
Read by Juliet Stevenson

ANGELA MERKEL
FREEDOM

Golden Voice narrator Juliet Stevenson's skills shine in this memoir by the former chancellor of Germany. Angela Merkel's father, who was a Protestant pastor, moved her family from West Germany to the DDR when she was just weeks old. Her recollections of growing up in the East, especially of being a pastor's child, are quite fascinating. In many ways this is a typical memoir of a contemporary former politician—lots of names, places, and self-justification. Still, many will find it all fascinating, and not just her recollections of life in the East. Stevenson's voice, intonation, pacing, delivery, and German pronunciation are all splendid and make this a worthwhile production for those who are into contemporary world politics. *M.T.F.*

Macmillan Audio 27 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781250353733 $44.99

THE HOLLOW HALF: A Memoir of Bodies and Borders

Sarah Aziza
Read by Sarah Aziza

In this raw and poetic memoir, Sarah Aziza traces her own history of anorexia, trauma, and hospitalization alongside her family's history of occupation, violence, and displacement from Palestine. The beauty of Aziza's remarkable prose becomes apparent in her narration, which is quiet, vulnerable, and utterly compelling. There is a lot of Arabic scattered throughout; often Aziza uses Arabic words to highlight themes, memories, sensations, and moments. Getting to hear this multilingual memoir out loud in Aziza's own voice is an incredible gift. This is an unforgettable audiobook about how culture and history live inside bodies, and how personal healing and collective liberation are inextricably linked. A not-to-be-missed listen. *L.S.*

Dreamscape 12 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781666695038 $34.99

Narrator Elizabeth Wiley

By Leslie Fine

▶ Narrator Elizabeth Wiley's enthusiasm for her craft is effervescent. Whether she's discussing research, subject matter, language, or the narrative process, Wiley's energy infuses her work. For her, each audiobook is a path to a new experience, and sharing that path with listeners is a delight. "It's the connections, where you're learning more about the world," she says. "This is why I love doing this job!"

Wiley's first career was as a theater professor at the College of William and Mary. There, she taught acting, voice, dialect, and directing. It was a role she loved for 27 years, and she felt fortunate to work in her field. Sharing her knowledge and skill with students was a job she took very seriously, feeling the call to bring her absolute best to that profession. Still, she recognized the appeal of voice-over work.

In 2011, Wiley started exploring the world of vocal performance, and she began recording in 2012. Ever since, she says, she has been "loving it, loving it, loving it." Eventually, she saw the opportunity to take her classroom energy and devote that to audio work, too. She retired from teaching in 2021 and expanded even more on her vocal performance commitments. "It's very fulfilling for me as an actor and performer, being in a field where I am contributing, where people are gaining a lot from what you do. I'm excited to be part of this industry."

Wiley has a balanced collection of genres and styles to her credit. "I've worked with a lot of history and biography. I also love bringing history to life through historical fiction." She adds, "Stories are the way we learn best. When we're engaged with characters, and really invested in what happens to them, and it happens to be surrounded by a setting, circumstance, and cultural milieu . . . Those 'A-ha!' moments are great."

While she enjoys the process of narrating all genres, Wiley would love to try classical literature, noting, "The writing, the characters, and the story are so timeless and so superb that they get retold. It's all about the language. If it's written well, maybe there's a little bit of poetry embedded . . . I just love it."

Elizabeth Wiley's positive energy enhances her considerable narrating skill. She believes in the value of stories and the lives that inspire them. "As with anyone in this field of creation and humanity, I just want to put in my word for the human voice—the human act of storytelling— because it's the connection with other humans, and nature, and animals that keeps us whole, healed, and healthy."

WILD THING: A Life of Paul Gauguin

Sue Prideaux
Read by Elizabeth Wiley

Wild Thing
A Life of Paul Gauguin
Sue Prideaux
rb media
READ BY ELIZABETH WILEY

Elizabeth Wiley narrates this extensive biography based on new research on the French artist Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) as if it were a wondrous adventure tale. Gauguin began as a Post-Impressionist and Symbolist but is best known for his unique paintings of Tahitian women and his tumultuous friendship with Van Gogh. Discovering art in his early 30s, he freed himself from his career as a stockbroker, his marriage, and his five children and set sail for a new life in French Polynesia. Wiley's expressive voice is full of color and animation befitting Gauguin's bold use of color, native island themes, and uninhibited lifestyle. She brings warmth and delight into the most mundane details, transporting the listener on an odyssey from Europe to the Marquesas Islands and Tahiti with an unforgettable artist. *J.E.S.*

Tantor Media 16.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798331970147 $29.99
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798331970154 $59.95

Wiley narrates this extensive biography as if it were a wondrous adventure tale.

Photo by Asha McLaughlin

THE INVISIBLE SPY: Churchill's Rockefeller Center Spy Ring and America's First Secret Agent of World War II
Thomas Maier
Read by Stephen Graybill

Anyone who believes the American entrance into WWII was easy and inevitable will be shocked to hear that the path was difficult and paved with spies, lies, and coercion. Stephen Graybill performs this audiobook with the skill of a newscaster who's recounting revelation upon revelation about the spies on both sides of the war (and the Atlantic) who were using their skills to urge Americans to join the desperate struggle against fascism, or not. The names of the spies are surprising, including James Bond creator Ian Fleming and football-hero-turned-spy Ernest Cuneo, who played an oversized role as a White House insider and Fleming ally. Newsman Walter Winchell's influence was outstanding, often counteracting propaganda from American Nazi sympathizers who encouraged Americans not to get involved with "that European war." *M.S.*

Harlequin Audio 12.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781488233333 $33.59

HUNGER LIKE A THIRST: From Food Stamps to Fine Dining, a Restaurant Critic Finds Her Place at the Table
Besha Rodell
Read by Besha Rodell

Born in Australia, food critic Besha Rodell lived in the US for many years, but her voice still has the lilt and distinctive accent of an Aussie. She narrates at a good pace and with strong emotion. What sets her apart is that she has had to struggle to succeed in the posh world of fine dining criticism. Her backstory includes being raised by hippies—Australian academic dad and American journalist mom—and stints in restaurant work. Ultimately, she became a food and dining writer for alternative weeklies in Atlanta and Los Angeles. She now lives in Melbourne, and some of the most revealing writing celebrates its cafés and food scene. This James Beard Award winner's memoir is packed with sharp observations and witty repartee. *A.D.M.*

Macmillan Audio 7.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781250401694 $19.99

ACCIDENTALLY ON PURPOSE
Kristen Kish
Read by Kristen Kish

ACCIDENTALLY ON PURPOSE
a memoir
KRISTEN KISH

"Top Chef" host and alum Kristen Kish beautifully delivers her memoir, displaying her compassion throughout. Adopted and raised in Michigan, Kish never doubted her family's love, even as she struggled with social anxiety. Her deep family bonds and drive to succeed echo throughout her story. A move to Boston marked a turning point; there, she began to embrace her identity, and her culinary career flourished with the help of a trusted mentor. She then auditioned for "Top Chef," which propelled her beyond Boston, opening new doors personally and professionally. Kish's genuine, heartfelt narration pulls listeners into her triumphs, her family's pure love, and her joy at being able to experience life with the people who mean the most to her. *S.K.G.*

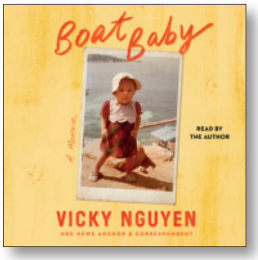
Hachette Audio 10.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781668648001 $27.99

Kristen Kish beautifully delivers her memoir.

GANDOLFINI
Jason Bailey
Read by Edoardo Ballerini

Edoardo Ballerini's excellent storytelling turns this biography into a fascinating listen. Born in New Jersey to working-class parents, James Gandolfini focused on acting after moving to New York City. Before becoming Tony Soprano, he was a hardworking stage actor, who earned the respect and friendship of actors, directors, and critics. Ballerini details a bighearted, generous, master craftsman who was also plagued by self-doubt. Once "The Sopranos" was a megahit, Gandolfini's mind-numbing "Sopranos" schedule—he would work sometimes until 2 am, go home, learn lines for the next day's shoot, and get very little sleep—makes his struggle with alcohol and drugs seem inevitable. His sudden death at 51 left everyone reeling. While the narration feels rushed, Ballerini's artistry, Bailey's well-researched biography, and Gandolfini's huge talent make this audiobook must-listening. *S.J.H.*

Recorded Books 10.5 hrs. Unabridged
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798895948767 $29.99
(also CD, MP3)



BOAT BABY
Vicky Nguyen
Read by Vicky Nguyen

Award-winning NBC news anchor and chief consumer investigative correspondent Vicky Nguyen delivers her memoir with the same passion and rapid-fire delivery that she brings to her television work. This audiobook offers great insight into the talented journalist. Born in Saigon, Nguyen fled to a Malaysian refugee camp with her family, finally immigrating to the U.S., where she continues to experience the pain of racism. Her ambitious quest for each TV job is carefully balanced with her concern for how her family will be affected as she climbs the career ladder. Nguyen expresses palpable admiration for her father's work ethic and her mother's dedication to family, along with her husband Brian's love, all of which shaped her into the independent career woman, daughter, wife, and mother she is today. *S.D.B.*

Simon & Schuster Audio 7.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781797191867 $19.99

PROTO: How One Ancient Language Went Global

Laura Spinney
Read by Emma Spurgin-Hussey

The topic of this audiobook—the evolution of language—requires a wide range of skills. Actor Emma Spurgin-Hussey's rich, expressive voice demonstrates the linguistic relationships and shifts. Her performance is adept in every syllable and accent. Why do so many of today's languages share a common Eurasian root? Linguists and archaeologists find answers in similarities and variations, and sometimes even in the absence of words. The absence of nautical words, for example, suggests possible inlander origins of a language. Was our proto language spoken by copper traders on the Black Sea? Or marauding horsemen from the steppes? Every theory has its alternatives, its twists and historical anomalies. All are wonderfully conveyed by this steady, supple, supremely competent, and endlessly listenable narrator. *D.A.W.*

Bloomsbury Publishing 9 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781639732609 $22.00

THE LAST DYNASTY: Ancient Egypt from Alexander the Great to Cleopatra

Toby Wilkinson
Read by Julian Elfer

Narrator Julian Elfer has undertaken many daunting subjects: the pharmacist of Auschwitz, the Borgias, lost expeditions to the Greenland ice cap. Here, he faces down the challenge of a 300-year generational narrative in which all the principals are named either Ptolemy or Cleopatra. At the early death of Alexander, Ptolemy, his shrewdest commander, took the grandest prize: Egypt. Ptolemaic rule ended dramatically three centuries later with the suicide of Cleopatra VII in 30 BCE. Those familiar events are compressed here; the focus instead is on the skill and sagacity of Ptolemaic rule over Egypt—for example, in honoring Egyptian gods and rituals, and introducing Macedonian agricultural methods to Egyptian farming. This superbly written and expertly performed narrative illuminates one of history's anomalies—and one of its high points. *D.A.W.*

HighBridge Audio 11 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781696619202 $24.99

THE GOLDEN ROAD: How Ancient India Transformed the World

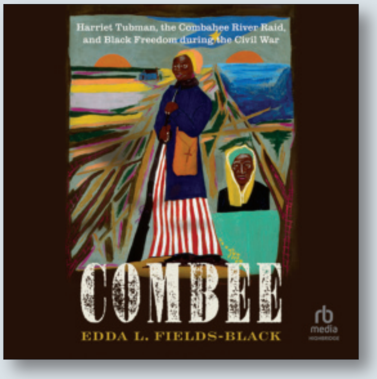
William Dalrymple
Read by William Dalrymple

Author/narrator William Dalrymple shares his fascination with the remarkable history of India's profound worldwide intellectual influence. His idiosyncratic and charming British speech and manner, along with his amiability and intelligence, are engaging throughout. His pacing and phrasing are natural, unaffected, and dictated by the material. He varies longish pauses—which allow the listener to absorb the sometimes complex details—with shorter sentences expressing excitement. His emphasis and shading of words, and his occasional deeply felt reactions, mirror the sense of the text and, therefore, illuminate it. The clear, unpretentious narration that takes the listener through this wide-ranging story of the spread of Indian religion, art, philosophy, mathematics, and science makes for an educational pleasure. *W.M.*

Bloomsbury Publishing 13.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781639734689 $28.35

COMBEE: Harriet Tubman, the Combahee River Raid, and Black Freedom During the Civil War

Edda L. Fields-Black
Read by Machelle Williams


Harriet Tubman, the Combahee River Raid, and Black Freedom during the Civil War
COMBEE
EDDA L. FIELDS-BLACK
rb media

Machelle Williams delivers this sweeping, detailed history of Harriet Tubman's work with a consistent, engaging voice that doesn't waver. While Tubman's name is widely associated with the Underground Railroad, Fields-Black's Pulitzer Prize winner provides a vivid account of Tubman as an embedded spy who collected information for the Union Army to attack the South's resources of rice via the Combahee River. The result is a consistently detailed history, much of which is documented fully for the first time and conveyed with an academic's eye for accuracy. Listeners should prepare for a deep dive into the history of the Civil War and Tubman's historical leadership. Williams's performance matches the intent of this historical work: to be clear, balanced, yet moving. *S.P.C.*

HighBridge Audio 25.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade: ISBN 9781696611213 $29.99

Clear, balanced, yet moving.

THE CROSSING: El Paso, the Southwest, and America's Forgotten Origin Story

Richard Parker
Read by Timothy Andrés Pabon

Narrator Timothy Andrés Pabon brings numerous essential skills to this richly detailed history of El Paso, Texas. Most important are his command of languages and accents, and a degree of conviction that supports the author's distinctly Southwestern and multicultural perspective. Parker, a respected journalist who, sadly, died the week this book was published, argues that El Paso, not New York, was the key crossing in American migration, and he summons the full history of the Southwest in support. Heroes and villains are writ large, and a chief heavy is President James Polk, father of the Mexican-American War. Pabon's unmistakable outrage underscores a shameful chronicle of exploitation, violence, and enslavement, and provides a moral compass for looking back on the Southwest's many-layered past. *D.A.W.*

Harper Audio 13.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9780063161955 $27.99

THE MANY LIVES OF ANNE FRANK
Ruth Franklin
Read by Erin Bennett

This audiobook provides an extraordinary exploration of Anne Frank's life from her early years to her tragic demise, emphasizing the enduring significance of her diary through various media such as books, theater, and more. Narrator Erin Bennett approaches the text with profound respect for Anne and her memory while skillfully conveying the numerous other narratives within the audiobook. Unlike other biographers, author Ruth Franklin not only includes stories about Anne's family but also extensively discusses how contemporary writers, movie and stage producers, and others use Anne Frank's legacy for political purposes. Bennett smoothly weaves the narrative, whose expressive range is remarkable in both depth and breadth. Whether conveying Anne's emotions or addressing contemporary issues, Bennett delivers a memorable performance with just the right tone and feeling. *D.J.S.*

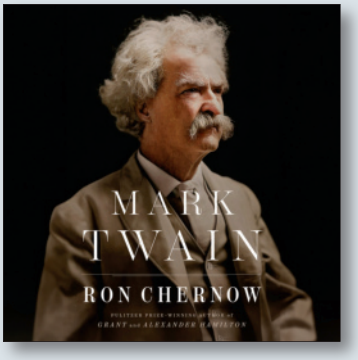
Blackstone Audio 12.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798228296626 $24.95
(also CD, MP3)
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798228296619 $64.95
(also CD)

SHOTS HEARD ROUND THE WORLD: America, Britain, and Europe in the Revolutionary War
John Ferling
Read by Jason Keller

This account of the international politics of the American Revolution is given a steady narration by Jason Keller. The author goes into the role of the French, as well as the Spanish and Dutch, in joining forces to support the American colonists against their common enemy, the British. He does not spare descriptions of the brutality of the war or the political machinations among the various players in the worldwide drama. Keller is clear in his enunciation, and his overall delivery, while a bit quick and staccato, is outstanding. With the 250th anniversary of the Revolution taking place next year, this work should be a popular listen. *M.T.F.*

Bloomsbury Publishing 20.25 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781639730179 $31.50

MARK TWAIN
Ron Chernow
Read by Jason Culp



Twain's twang, as delivered by Jason Culp, runs through this compelling and comprehensive audiobook like a vein of gold. He convincingly portrays the great humorist in all his guises—raconteur, lecturer, parent, public figure, wit, and philosopher—homespun and not. Culp expertly narrates the exposition (and in a 44-hour biography there's plenty) and modulates his voice and pitch for different speakers. But it's in his emulation of the tone and timing of the old rakehell himself that Culp sparkles. Chernow, master biographer of Washington, Hamilton, and Grant, turns his considerable skills as a researcher, writer, and interpreter to America's greatest wit. Twain, who was among the most famous people of his time, made poor investments but good copy. *A.D.M.*

Penguin Audio 44.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9780593951842 $40.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9780593951859 $95.00

Culp sparkles.

1861: The Lost Peace
Jay Winik
Read by Arthur Morey

This audiobook about the months before and weeks after Abraham Lincoln's inauguration is sensitively narrated by Golden Voice Arthur Morey. The author takes us through a series of events culminating in the attack on Fort Sumter, which began the Civil War. Documenting the multiple attempts to prevent the conflict from occurring, he focuses on the largely forgotten Washington Peace Conference, a desperate attempt by moderates from both the North and South to avoid war. Morey reminds the listener that Lincoln, a newcomer to national politics, was viewed by many as a lightweight. Yet, when he had to make decisions, he was ready to assume the requisite responsibilities. Ably guided by Morey's fluid narration, this work offers the listener insights into how high the stakes were in the period leading up to Lincoln's inauguration and the beginning of the Civil War. *L.W.S.*

Hachette Audio 10 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781549129506 $27.99

ON JAMES BALDWIN
Colm Tóibín
Read by Gary Furlong

On
James
Baldwin
Colm
Tóibín
READ BY GARY FURLONG

This is a serious and, at times, personal discussion of one of America's finest 20th-century writers. Colm Tóibín makes interesting connections between the American Black experience and that of the Irish. In fact, Tóibín winds up making meaningful connections between Baldwin and James Joyce, Henry James, and Oscar Wilde, among others. Gary Furlong's relaxed, pleasant tone and Irish accent make the interesting but sometimes complex intellectual argument easy to listen to. And the argument, although never explicitly stated as such, is that Baldwin deserves consideration not just as a great American writer, but as one of the great writers in English of his century. Listeners may not be convinced, but this should encourage them to go back to his fiction and essays. *D.M.H.*

Tantor Media 3.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798855594522 $12.99
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798855594539 $27.95

ABUNDANCE
Ezra Klein, Derek Thompson
Read by Ezra Klein, Derek Thompson

With muckraking fervor, popular podcasters Ezra Klein and Derek Thompson ask a complicated question: What's wrong with how our government operates, and what needs to change? Both authors begin in an optimistic tone but shift into a world-weary tone when discussing how seminal institutions such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) once encouraged and supported scientific invention and innovation but now seem tied in knots with budget-slashing from the Right and needless red tape from the Left. Operation Warp Speed's federal/private partnership to quickly create a COVID-19 vaccine is presented as a healthy example of how focus and efficiency can meet a nation's most dire needs. A thorough and intelligent discussion that sounds the alarm without sounding alarmist. *B.P.*

Simon & Schuster Audio 7.25 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781797168609 $19.99 (also CD)

LIFE AND ART: Essays
Richard Russo
Read by Richard Russo

LIFE AND ART
Richard Russo
Bestselling author of Somebody's Fool

Richard Russo is thoughtful and reflective as he narrates his new collection of essays, which has two parts. The first half, "Life," focuses on his family and his blue-collar hometown in upstate New York; the second half, "Art," delves into the writing process and how writers essentially steal ideas from the world around them. He poignantly states, "All art thrives on conflict." Russo is conversational as he narrates his own work, candidly detailing his own conflict relating to class and status. The essays tend to become repetitive when Russo discusses his parents' rocky relationship and the mental illness that crippled both his mother and grandmother. But, overall, this work is deeply personal while remaining relatable to listeners. *C.A.P.*

Random House Audio 7.25 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217080168 $20.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217080175 $57.00

TO SAVE AND TO DESTROY: Writing as an Other
Viet Thanh Nguyen
Read by Viet Thanh Nguyen

In these six moving, thought-provoking essays, originally delivered as the Norton Lectures at Harvard, Viet Thanh Nguyen explores what it means to write as an "other" and what "otherness"—literary, artistic, cultural, and political—has to teach us about solidarity and art making in times of violence and rising global fascism. Blending literary criticism, political commentary, and personal reflection, these lectures are both a balm and a wake-up call, reminding all of us, writers and nonwriters alike, of the power of critical thinking and radical compassion. Nguyen's delivery is serious and measured, but never dry. His fierce conviction comes through loud and clear; it's easy to imagine being in the audience at the lectures. Listening to this short, powerful audiobook is the next best thing. *L.S.*

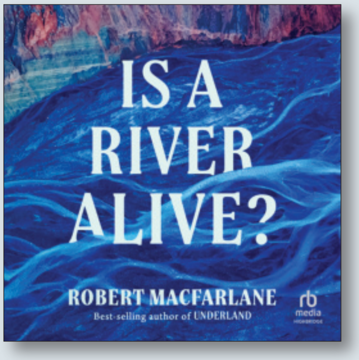
Dreamscape 5.25 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781666685961 $34.99

TURNING TO BIRDS: The Power and Beauty of Noticing
Lili Taylor
Read by Lili Taylor

Actor and Audubon Society Board Director Lili Taylor's quick and breathy initial delivery settles into a gentle, engaged exploration of the world of birding and its profound influence on her life. Her awareness of the natural world shifted during an emotional sabbatical, which began her journey. She began paying closer daily attention and taking "awe walks" through cityscapes and countrysides. Taylor brings listeners to an Ohio birding festival, marveling at the diverse group of birders assembled for a few days of shared joy; recounts breaks spent with southwestern birds while filming in New Mexico; and describes evenings counting birds illuminated in the beams of New York City's Tribute in Light. Taylor's genuine appreciation is sure to inspire wide-eyed wonder in listeners who spend time with this meditative audio production. *J.R.T.*

Random House Audio 4.25 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217077854 $18.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217078158 $47.50

IS A RIVER ALIVE?
Robert Macfarlane
Read by Robert Macfarlane



British nature writer Macfarlane travels to Ecuador, India, and Quebec, Canada, to affirmatively answer the question that the title poses. He explores, explains, and experiences the dark fate of some urban rivers, as well as the grandeur of unspoiled waterways. The Cambridge Fellow's British accent gives the text a kind of authority. He narrates in a poetic, enrapt style, sounding awed by and in tune with cloud forest and Indian coast. His pace is thoughtful and unhurried until his dramatic ride down a river in Canada. Here he dramatically, almost breathlessly, tells the story of running the rapids of the still pristine and wild Mutehekau Shipu—locally dubbed the Magpie. A well-narrated, pertinent, and pointed audiobook. *A.D.M.*

HighBridge Audio 10.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781696619875 $17.49

A well-narrated, pertinent, and pointed audiobook.

WHO IS GOVERNMENT?
The Untold Story of Public Service

Michael Lewis [Ed.]
Read by Michael Lewis, Sarah Vowell, John Lanchester, Geraldine Brooks, Casey Cep, Dave Eggers, W. Kamau Bell

Think the federal civil service is filled with pencil-pushing drones? This collection of essays—curated by Michael Lewis and narrated by their authors—will quickly disabuse you of that notion. Casey Cep uses a journalistic tone that, nonetheless, conveys her genuine admiration for a remarkable Veterans Affairs employee who has devoted his life to honoring fallen soldiers. For a change of pace, W. Kamau Bell effectively uses the interview format with a young Black woman who is starting her career as a government lawyer. Inevitably, other authors are less successful at making the transition from print journalist to narrator. But the real star here is Lewis himself, who bookends the collection with two engaging essays delivered with the polish of a veteran podcaster. *D.B.*

Penguin Audio 6.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798217082902 $22.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: ISBN 9798217082919 $95.00

HOPE DIES LAST:
Visionary People Across the World, Fighting to Find Us a Future

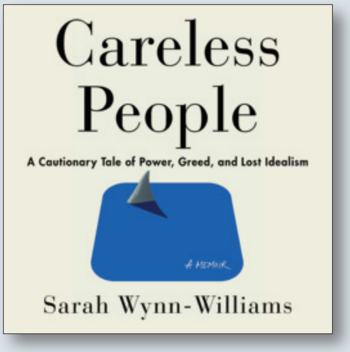
Alan Weisman
Read by Fred Sanders, Alan Weisman

Fred Sanders narrates clearly, does accents credibly, shares data faithfully, and tells stories with a fine tone and tempo. Weisman's science-driven audiobook ranges around the world to find individuals who are working on innovative projects aimed at saving species and habitats to mitigate climate change. Weisman profiles individuals who are making a difference. They include the Ojibwes in the Midwest who are battling against the rapacious Enbridge oil company, ecology visionaries who are trying to use art to sue for peace and ecological improvement, and a Bangladesh company that is creating denim using recycled plastic. Weisman found solutions in MIT labs, Iraqi wetlands, and the Netherlands. One of his best quotes: "There is no Planet Two." A compelling and significant listen. *A.D.M.*

Penguin Audio 13.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798217011995 $24.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: ISBN 9798217012008 $95.00

CARELESS PEOPLE:
A Cautionary Tale of Power, Greed, and Lost Idealism

Sarah Wynn-Williams
Read by Sarah Wynn-Williams



Yikes! This tell-all exposé written and performed by a former insider at Facebook confirms concerns about the inner workings of one of the most influential organizations on the planet. Author Sarah Wynn-Williams tells her personal story of her climb to the upper branches of management at Facebook and the disappointment she felt at every move. While acknowledging that most users consider Facebook a friendly, useful tool, Wynn-Williams perfectly articulates her concerns about what goes on behind the curtain. In her opinion, Facebook is run by people who are more concerned with profits and power than ethics and responsibility. In fact, the upper echelon of the company goes out of its way to avoid such consideration, using expediency and opportunity as guidelines. *M.S.*

Macmillan Audio 13.25 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781250403155 $26.99

Wynn-Williams perfectly articulates her concerns.

THERE IS NO PLACE FOR US:
Working and Homeless in America

Brian Goldstone
Read by Dion Graham, Brian Goldstone

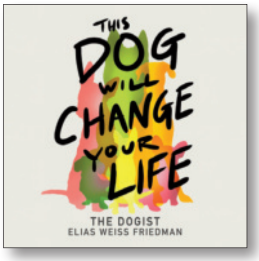
Golden Voice Dion Graham brings clarity and compassion to Goldstone's heartbreaking exposé of the housing issues faced by Atlanta's working poor. Graham's warm voice and understated delivery illuminate the suffering of families who work hard, often at more than one job, and yet cannot afford the escalating rent in the third-fastest-growing metropolitan area in the U.S. The problem of housing in America, according to long-form journalist Goldstone, comes from viewing housing as a commodity to be exploited by those who profit from it. Although Goldstone is not an accomplished audiobook performer, he gives a sincere accounting in the introduction and epilogue, making clear that "families are not 'falling' into homelessness. They're being pushed." *S.G.*

Random House Audio 13.25 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798217066902 $25.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: ISBN 9798217066919 $95.00

THIS DOG WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Elias Weiss Friedman, Ben Greenman
Read by Elias Weiss Friedman

Anyone who's ever loved a dog will be engaged by this winning production. Author Friedman, aka The Dogist, known for his "dog on the street" photos of dogs in New York City and around the world, is a warm and charming narrator of his own work. Friedman explores the cultural and sociological history of humans and dogs, and listeners learn about how he became The Dogist. He shares how he goes about capturing his signature dog photos—including the funny noises he makes to keep the dogs' attention; his own history with the dogs he's known and loved; and some of the places his photography has taken him, from dog rescue organizations to a program where incarcerated people raise puppies to the White House lawn. *J.M.D.*



Random House Audio 8.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798217073931 $20.00

What Makes This Audiobook Great?

What impressed me about this collection of nonfiction audiobooks is how skillfully today's narrators have become at connecting with a title's overall tone, attitude, and themes. A good audiobook performance is about more than interesting phrasing patterns or an appealing pitch palette. Narrating a collection of writing from an iconic NYC fashion maven, Suzanne Toren proves herself to be a great choice for the project because of her mature vocal character; the author was in her 90s when she wrote her collection of observations and wisdom *No One Has Seen it All*. As I recall various pieces of wisdom the author shares, I hear Toren's voice and recall her total immersion in the author's character. This fabulous audiobook is a satisfying reminder that having confidence in the values we cherish and the discipline to live them consistently is a great way to spend our later years.

Little Bosses Everywhere is another title whose narrator creates a vocal tone that perfectly matches the author's writing, which offers stunning reporting and personal stories about the high-risk world of multilevel marketing. Though Nikki Massoud has the acting chops to over-perform the drama in this revelatory audiobook, her performance stays in documentary mode. She narrates Bridget Read's jaw-dropping research and sad stories with balance and equanimity. By toning down the outrage that could be provoked by the way Mary Kay, Amway, and other multilevel marketing companies do business, Massoud's performance allows listeners to discover their own reactions to the author's reporting. Good listening and *bon courage!*—*Tom Walken*

NO ONE HAS SEEN IT ALL of Good Taste

Betty Halbreich, Rebecca Paley, Lena Dunham [Fore.]
Read by Suzanne Toren, Helen Laser

Suzanne Toren's slower pacing, mature vocal timbre, and suffer-no-fools confidence make her performance a perfect fit for the late author's last audiobook, a collection of works written in the five years before her death at 96. Toren modulates her outsized dramatic talent to capture the full measure of class, wisdom, and charm of the New York City icon who was well known for her style and the wardrobes she curated for her admiring customers at Bergdorf Goodman. Offering them more than clothing advice, she showed them a way of approaching life that shimmers with the glow of her honesty, perspective, and self-awareness. The advice and personal reflections she shares in this lovely audiobook will affirm for women of a certain age that approaching life with confidence and class pays off in myriad ways. *T.W.*

Hachette Audio 5.25 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781668646953 $18.99

HOW TO STOP TRYING

Kate Williams
Read by Kate Williams

Rooted in author Kate Williams's own quest to stop her relentless striving and self-condemnation, this affecting audiobook explores the many ways we can internalize negative judgments about ourselves when we fall short of society's imperatives and standards. Her struggles with ADD, depression, and anxiety are part of the story, but the broader narrative is about how people—especially women—are conditioned to strive relentlessly, ignore their own needs, and feel terrible about themselves. Williams's vocal character and overall performance have a perky, rebellious energy that works well to convey her self-affirming approach to these challenges. The compassion in her voice, along with her astute observations and arguments, will inspire overachieving listeners to become more sensitive to when society's expectations work against their own well-being. *T.W.*

Macmillan Audio 6.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781250381361 $19.99
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9781250417381 $64.99

LITTLE BOSSES EVERYWHERE

Bridget Read
Read by Nikki Massoud

Multilevel marketing companies such as Mary Kay and Amway promise the freedom, security, and status of being your own boss but seldom deliver on those promises. This gripping audiobook reveals the industry's misleading recruitment practices, financial tricks, and cunning social manipulation. Nikki Massoud narrates with documentary seriousness that resonates with every personal story and shady practice in this extensive history. Her understated performance demonstrates an impressive ability to adjust her vocal attitude to the large and small revelations as they unfold. With clear, easy-to-absorb elocution, her intelligent interpretations provide a rich vehicle for the author's revelations. Citing lax government oversight and corporate avarice, the author explains how conservative political forces have always been complicit in the persistence of MLM's exploitation and abuse. *T.W.*

Random House Audio 11 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217064793 $23.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217064809 $85.50

TINY EXPERIMENTS
Anne-Laure Le Cunff
Read by Anne-Laure Le Cunff

A neuroscientist and former Google superstar describes how to reject rigid career paths and, through open-minded personal experimentation, discover work that truly satisfies us. Instead of being trapped in a fixed vision of our future lives, Anne-Laure Le Cunff offers practical guidance on how we can work each day on challenges more aligned with our deepest aspirations. She also describes individual habits and collaborative strategies that can help us contribute to others once we're on a more fulfilling path. She performs this exceptional guide with charming sincerity and the quiet confidence of someone with a comfortable grasp of her ideas, current research findings, and her stories about successful people past and present. This confidence will draw listeners into her humane thinking and inspiring suggestions. *T.W.*

Penguin Audio 6.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217011834 $20.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217011841 $66.50

YOU'RE THE BOSS
Sabina Nawaz
Read by Sabina Nawaz, Lisa Flanagan, Jonathan Todd Ross, Kamran Khan

In this outstanding guide to all aspects of managing people, an international executive coach and former Microsoft insider explains her approach to becoming all you can be as a developer of people. She narrates her ideas and suggestions with authenticity and confidence. Combined with her accessible thinking and vivid examples, the clarity and compassion in her performance will motivate many to take a fresh look at their effectiveness. The challenges and pitfalls of leading others cited in her case studies are a highly relatable collection of dilemmas and growth opportunities all bosses face. The experience and depth of understanding evident in these suggestions make this audiobook a top choice for professional growth. The additional narrators perform brief quotes from some of the author's clients. *T.W.*

Simon & Schuster Audio 7.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781797185798 $19.99

More Listening

CLASS CLOWN: The Memoirs of a Professional Wiseass: How I Went 77 Years Without Growing Up
Dave Barry, read by Dave Barry

The people and experiences that created the irreverent comic

Simon & Schuster Audio Unabridged
Trade Ed.: CD, DD

THE POWER OF MATTERING: How Leaders Can Create a Culture of Significance
Zach Mercurio, read by Patrick Mealey

Employees want to be treated like significant individuals

Ascent Audio Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD

THE MASTER OF DRUMS: Gene Krupa and the Music He Gave the World
Elizabeth J. Rosenthal, read by Samantha Desz

The life of a legend in the golden age of American pop music

Tantor Media Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD
Library Ed.: DD

EMPTY VESSEL: The Story of the Global Economy in One Barge
Ian Kumekawa, read by Dion Graham

Captivating history of the impact of global commerce across the oceans

Random House Audio Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: DD

TIME ANXIETY: The Illusion of Urgency and a Better Way to Live
Chris Guillebeau, read by Chris Guillebeau

The angst we feel about our use of time is all in our heads

Random House Audio Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: DD

UNDERESTIMATED: The Surprisingly Simple Shift to Quit Playing Small, Name the Fear, and Move Forward Anyway
Mary Marantz, Sharon McMahon [Fore.], read by Mary Marantz

A moving invitation to change chronic fear and self-defeating criticism

ChristianAudio Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD

AT PEACE: Choosing a Good Death after a Long Life
Samuel Harrington, read by Brian Troxell

Prolonging a life of pain and limited functioning is not worth it

Hachette Audio Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD

REWRITE YOUR RULES: The Journey to Success in Less Time with More Freedom
Morgan DeBaun, read by Morgan DeBaun

Overcome discouragement by going big and connecting with inner strength

Random House Audio Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: DD

THE NEW SCIENCE OF MOMENTUM: How the Best Coaches and Leaders Build a Fire from a Single Spark
Don Yaeger, Bernie Banks, Karen Cyphers, read by Julian Thomas

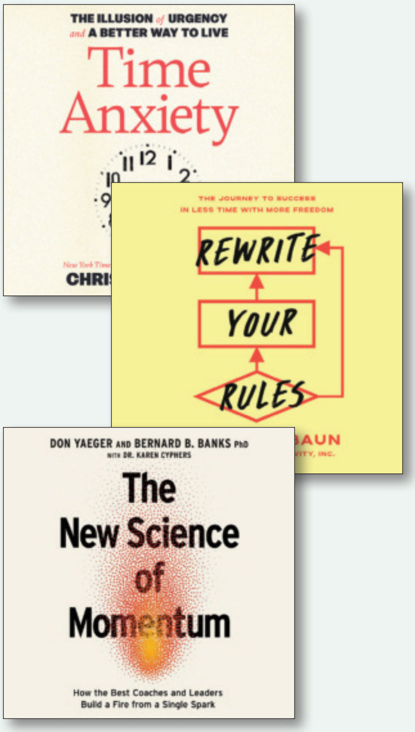
A broad look at what it takes to create loyal and productive teams

HarperCollins Leadership Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD

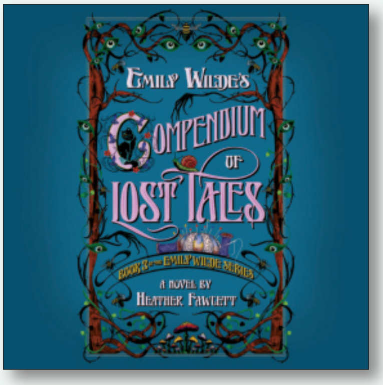
THE MEASURE OF PROGRESS: Counting What Really Matters
Diane Coyle, read by Harrie Dobby

Economic statistics like GDP don't always measure what we think they do.

Ascent Audio Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD


THE ILLUSION of URGENCY and A BETTER WAY TO LIVE
Time Anxiety
CHRIS
THE JOURNEY TO SUCCESS IN LESS TIME WITH MORE FREEDOM
REWRITE YOUR RULES
DON YAEGER AND BERNARD B. BANKS PhD WITH DR. KAREN CYPHERS
The New Science of Momentum
How the Best Coaches and Leaders Build a Fire from a Single Spark

Author Heather Fawcett


Emily Wilde's
Compendium
of
Lost Tales
Book III of the Emily Wilde Series
A Novel by
Heather Fawcett

EMILY WILDE'S COMPENDIUM OF LOST TALES: Emily Wilde, Book 3

Heather Fawcett
Read by Ell Potter, Michael Dodds

Narrators Ell Potter and Michael Dodds return in this lively third installment of the Emily Wilde series. Emily embarks on another adventure in her fantastical field of study as she takes on her most ambitious role as faerie queen. Additionally, Emily and her fiancé, Wendell, must also uncover the cure to a deadly curse cast by Wendell's stepmother. This performance is packed with thrilling story beats, magical discoveries, and a steadfast romance that will satisfy fans of the series and new listeners. Potter's airy narration style with a slight hint of sarcasm blends with Dodds's tone of humorous candor. Both narrations are perfect for a fun fantasy, providing hilarious scenes and dramatic turns. This performance is just the right amount of romance and spectacular adventure. *G.M.*

Random House Audio 11.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9780593791486 $25.00
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9780593791493 $95.00

> *Just the right amount of romance and spectacular adventure.*

Emily Wilde's
Encyclopaedia of Faeries
A Novel by Heather Fawcett
Emily Wilde's
Map of the Otherlands
Book II of the Emily Wilde Series
A Novel by Heather Fawcett
The Language of Ghosts
Heather Fawcett

More Listening

EMILY WILDE'S ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF FAERIES: Emily Wilde, Book 1

Heather Fawcett, read by Ell Potter, Michael Dodds

Random House Audio Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: DD

EMILY WILDE'S MAP OF THE OTHERLANDS: Emily Wilde, Book 2

Heather Fawcett, read by Ell Potter, Michael Dodds

Random House Audio Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD
Books on Tape
Library Ed.: DD

THE LANGUAGE OF GHOSTS

Heather Fawcett, read by Caitlin Kelly

Harper Audio Unabridged Ages 10+
Trade Ed.: DD

Photo by Karen McKinnon

L. RON HUBBARD PRESENTS WRITERS OF THE FUTURE VOLUME 41:
The Best New SF & Fantasy of the Year

Jody Lynn Nye [Ed.]
Read by Kirby Heyborne, Jim Meskimen, Tamra Meskimen, Taylor Meskimen

Narrator Kirby Heyborne joins the Meskimen family—Jim, Tamra, and daughter Taylor—in energetically giving voice to a dozen new stories by the winners of the Writers of the Future contest. In this year's crop, AI features strongly, with Heyborne creating a tone of schoolboy innocence in "The Boy from Elsewhen" by Barlow Crassmont. Taylor Meskimen finds a deceptively naturalistic voice for a self-driving car in Randyn C.J. Bartholomew's "Ascii." Also included are pieces by established authors. Tamra Meskimen has fun mimicking alien voices in Sean Williams's sailing ship/astrophysics mash-up, "Under False Colours." And Jim Meskimen captures L. Ron Hubbard's classic sci-fi pulp rhythms in "Tough Old Man" (1950). A fine sampling of some of the best new voices in today's science fiction and fantasy. *B.P.*

Galaxy Audio 16 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781619868465 $16.99

FLIGHT OF THE SPARROW:
An Intergalactic Adventure

Fallon DeMornay
Read by Savy Des-Etages

This new space opera is narrated by Savy Des-Etages. Nimah has worked hard to excel as a cadet, and now she's ready to begin her job as an agent for the Stars Intelligence and Government Authority. But her future is threatened when people learn she's the granddaughter of a famous pirate who has been accused of terrorism. Nimah has little choice but to join the motley crew who aim to break her grandmother out of prison. Des-Etages showcases her talent for bringing quirky characters of all ages to life. She sets a sprightly pace and manages the drama among the crew with plenty of excitement and fun. *J.E.M.*

Podium 13.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781039482814 $33.90

DOWN IN THE SEA OF ANGELS

Khan Wong
Read by Eunice Wong

DOWN IN THE SEA OF ANGELS
KHAN WONG

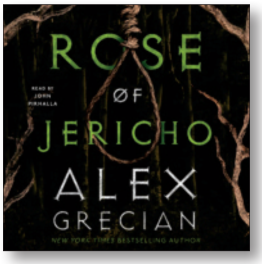
Eunice Wong does an outstanding job of narrating this combination of dystopian fantasy, historical fiction, and sci-fi. She captures the atmosphere of each of the three timelines, and the result is an intimate, thought-provoking performance. First, the listener meets Maida in 2106; she has the ability to perceive the history of objects. Second, the listener is introduced to Li Nuan, a sex-trafficked 16-year-old girl from 1906. Third, there is Nathan, a tech designer who is living the good life in 2006. All are connected through a jade teacup. Wong establishes distinct personalities for the three main characters, as well supporting characters within each timeline. She conveys the characters' emotions with no extra drama, which gives them a feeling of authenticity. *J.E.M.*

Dreamscape 11.25 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781666696028 $34.99

An intimate, thought-provoking performance.

ROSE OF JERICHO

Alex Grecian
Read by John Pirhalla



Narrator John Pirhalla does something outstanding in this horror audiobook: He makes what's normal seem creepy. He accomplishes this by mining that little bit of darkness inside the soul of each of author Grecian's characters. The problem starts when a grieving farmer kills the Angel of Death. After that, no one dies anymore. And that development lets loose all the dark secrets in the little New England town of Ascension. Also, three new female residents who arrive to care for an ailing relative get branded as witches by the locals. Since this production features characters throughout the U.S., Pirhalla capably employs a variety of accents. He skillfully paints an eerie tableau as supernatural beings seek to restore normalcy to life (and death). *D.E.M.*

Macmillan Audio 11 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781250353337 $26.99

COLD ETERNITY

S.A. Barnes
Read by Amara Jasper

Amara Jasper narrates an eerie horror story set aboard a spaceship carrying mostly frozen bodies. Halley hopes to escape a political scandal on Earth with a high-risk job as a glorified janitor on a massive spaceship carrying a cargo of cryogenically frozen humans. A trio of glitchy AI holograms accompanies her, and there seems to be something in the vents . . . always just out of sight. Jasper pulls listeners along as Halley tries to keep her composure and do her job even as her determination begins to crack. She captures Halley's mounting dread at being completely alone amid the periodic creaks and rattles of the ship as it moves through the darkness of space. *J.M.M.*

Macmillan Audio 9.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781250386106 $26.99
Library Ed.: ISBN 9781250419637 $79.99

THE MARTIAN CONTINGENCY: Lady Astronaut, Book 4

Mary Robinette Kowal
Read by Mary Robinette Kowal

Mary Robinette Kowal narrates her latest science fiction novel, putting her skills to excellent use in the fourth installment of the Lady Astronaut series. It's the 1950s, and Elma York has just landed on Mars to prep the planet for its first group of settlers. A pilot and mathematician, Elma has already paved the way for women in space, but now she faces unexpected hurdles: politicking, perimenopause, and mysterious signs of a previous disaster on the Red Planet. Interpersonal struggles and secrets threaten the viability of building a life on Mars. Kowal does more than narrate the story. She engrosses listeners in an entrancing audio play with dozens of distinct characters, voices altered by space equipment, and Elma's grounding inner monologue. Kowal's performance is a feat. *A.A.H.*

MARY ROBINETTE KOWAL
THE MARTIAN CONTINGENCY
A LADY ASTRONAUT NOVEL
ONLY FROM audible

Audible, Inc. 11.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD $24.95

THE KNIGHT AND THE BUTCHERBIRD: A Short Story

Alix E. Harrow
Read by Aida Reluzco

Aida Reluzco narrates a postapocalyptic tale of knights, shape-shifting demons, and a woman who is willing to do anything to protect her wife. Reluzco conveys Shrike's grim determination when she discovers that the knight who has come to slay the demon plaguing her village is none other than Sir John of Cincinnati, a legendary demon killer. Shrike knows she must act fast to kill Sir John first, as the demon used to be her wife, May, and Shrike is convinced her beloved still lives within the beast. Reluzco does an excellent job portraying wily Shrike and noble John, who has his own secrets. Listeners will be drawn into this captivating short story about love, survival, and desperation in a deadly Appalachian forest. *E.E.C.*

Brilliance Audio 1.25 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781511350198 $2.84

TRANSMENTATION | TRANSIENCE: Or, an Accession to the People's Council for Nine Thousand Worlds; The Formation Saga, Book 1

Darkly Lem
Read by Dion Graham

Dion Graham narrates a sweeping entry into a new series featuring an intriguing multiverse. Societies of people capable of traveling not only between stars but also between dimensions compete for control over all the known worlds. While some simply want to learn, others have more nefarious intentions. A routine mission goes awry, leading representatives from two competing societies to become caught up in an intricate web of political intrigue. Graham maintains an intense yet soft-spoken narration for the narrative, allowing the masterful world-building to pull listeners in. For the dialogue, he plays with volume and accents to great effect while maintaining clarity with the unusual names. A great start to a new series is complemented by Graham's skilled use of tone and inflection. *J.M.M.*

Blackstone Audio 12 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798200997244 $24.95
(also CD, MP3)
Blackstone Audio
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798200997237 $64.95
(also CD)

SOME THING BORROWED

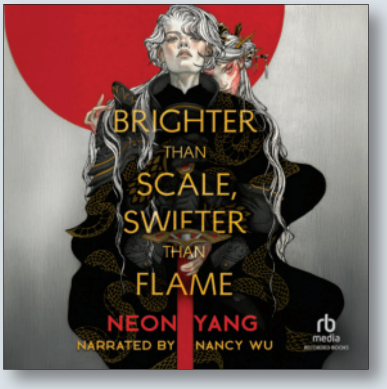
Emanuel Nisan
Read by Jeff Dylan Garrett and a Full Cast

Jeff Dylan Garrett and a full cast bring an unsettling short story to life. Cassie reviews her wedding photos and notices a creepy woman in some of them. She learns that the woman is a spirit who is part of a curse relating to the barrette Cassie wore on her wedding day. As the curse shatters her happy life, Cassie struggles to free herself from it. Garrett shoulders most of the performance, delivering the narrative. A varied cast imbues the other characters with dynamic voices. The production is underscored by subtle music and sound effects, which effectively build suspense. This short yet immersive performance delivers a thrilling audio experience. *J.M.M.*

Audio Flicks 2 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: DD $8.57

BRIGHTER THAN SCALE, SWIFTER THAN FLAME

Neon Yang
Read by Nancy Wu



Nancy Wu is the beating heart of this queer Asian-inspired fantasy. As a masked dragon-hunting knight, Yeva is a powerful mystery to most. Her deep distrust of the great beasts keeps her aligned with her guild's mission to destroy them and expand the empire. When she's tasked with traveling to Quanbao, however, Yeva is confronted by people who worship dragons. When she falls in love with their leader, Lady Sookhee, she must decide where her loyalties lie. What the narrative lacks in character development, Wu makes up for with her ethereal performance. Grounding the slightly predictable fantasy in an emotive, humanizing tone, Wu brings heart to this queer romance. *A.A.H.*

Recorded Books 5 hrs. Unabridged
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798895945612 $24.99 (also CD, MP3)

> *Nancy Wu is the beating heart of this queer Asian-inspired fantasy.*

OF MONSTERS AND MAINFRAMES

Barbara Truelove
Read by Chris Devon, Emana Rachelle, Charlie Albers, Eve Passeltiner, Zura Johnson, Cary Hite, Gail Shalan

This heartfelt sci-fi monster mash-up of an audiobook is stunningly narrated by an excellent ensemble. Charlie Albers voices *Demeter*, a spaceship that travels between planets whose human passengers keep getting murdered through paranormal encounters. Albers's impressive skill at differentiating voices enlivens the robotic *Demeter*, who is filled with anxiety; sobbing children who are trying to survive a werewolf; and the bubbly, overzealous spider drones. The rest of the cast voice the AI medical system, a werewolf, a human hybrid created by Frankenstein, a pharaoh, and humans who are slowly becoming more fish-like in worship of Cthulhu. This is a laugh-out-loud audiobook full of thrills and a touch of romance as *Demeter* and her surviving passengers set out for revenge against Dracula. *A.K.R.*

Dreamscape 12.75 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781666692570 $34.99

SPLINTER EFFECT:
A Splinter Effect, Book 1

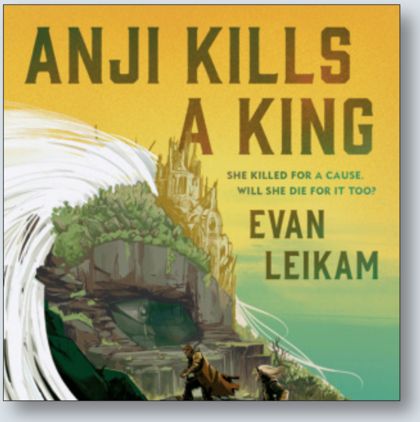
Andrew Ludington
Read by Roger Wayne

Indiana Jones meets "Quantum Leap" in this thrilling new science fiction series, splendidly performed by Roger Wayne. Twenty years after a failed attempt at going back in time to retrieve a long-lost gold menorah and leaving behind his mentee/partner, Aaron, Dr. Rabbit Ward tries again—this time in 535 C.E. Constantinople. Once there, he establishes some connections in the community and becomes a temporary partner of Helen, another time traveler who is also seeking the menorah. Wayne makes Rabbit crackle in his delivery of this compelling adventure. He captures the tension between Rabbit and Helen while also delivering the goods as Rabbit outsmarts Roman soldiers, cleverly saves a new friend's life, and confronts a powerful enemy—all without changing events in the future. *S.D.B.*

Macmillan Audio 10 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781250388407 $26.99

ANJI KILLS A KING:
The Rising Tide, Book 1

Evan Leikam
Read by Moira Quirk


ANJI KILLS A KING
SHE KILLED FOR A CAUSE. WILL SHE DIE FOR IT TOO?
EVAN LEIKAM

Moira Quirk brings her signature emotive and immersive talent to this fast-paced fantasy debut, keeping listeners on edge at every step. Anji has just slain a king—and now her story begins. She's quickly captured by the Hawk, a member of the infamous bounty hunting gang known as the Menagerie. With supernatural abilities, a deadly addiction, and a grumpy personality, the Hawk drags Anji along in hopes of securing a massive reward for her efforts. But the Hawk has secrets, and Anji has a troubled background. Their needs might just overlap if they can survive the other Menagerie members on their heels. Quirk's performance makes this essential listening. *A.A.H.*

Macmillan Audio 10.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781250401649 $26.99

Quirk's performance makes this essential listening.

EAT THE ONES YOU LOVE

Sarah Maria Griffin
Read by Lauren O'Leary, Barry McStay

Narrators Lauren O'Leary and Barry McStay deliver a chilling performance of this horror audiobook about a possessive orchid and the humans it wants to consume. Shell's life has fallen off the rails, and a job helping at a local flower shop, owned by the beautiful florist Neve, is exactly the change of pace she wants. O'Leary seamlessly delivers Irish and American accents, depicting Neve's ex-girlfriend with precision as she grows more suspicious of the mysterious plant's influence. McStay voices Baby, the orchid, by adopting a callous, judgmental voice as he describes the thoughts and actions of the humans around him, speaking primarily in an Irish accent. An immersive, spooky overlap of voices near the end cleverly captures Baby's slow exertion of influence upon another human. *A.K.R.*

eat the ones you love
SARAH MARIA GRIFFIN

Macmillan Audio 8.5 hrs. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781250353320 $19.99

THE STAR

Arthur C. Clarke
Read by Mike Vendetti

Narrator Mike Vendetti draws listeners into this story of an exploratory space mission. Its discoveries challenge the belief system of a Jesuit priest/chief astrophysicist named Father who believes the heavens declare God's handiwork. The explorers discover a faraway civilization superior to Earth's that was destroyed by a supernova. They also find the civilization's records—its history, culture, achievements, and response to impending destruction. Vendetti hints at something powerful coming as more discoveries are made. Listeners will be as shocked as Father when he reveals his conclusions, which may disprove some of humanity's longest held beliefs. The movingly presented short story's impact and powerful implications are timeless and are heightened by Vendetti's mastery as a storyteller. *S.G.B.*

Spoken Realms 16 mins. Unabridged
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798368949604 $4.99

SUNLIGHT PLAYING OVER A MOUNTAIN

Selina Li Bi
Read by Cindy Kay

Selina Li Bi's debut YA audiobook tells the story of 15-year-old Chinese-Filipino teen Jasmine Cheng, who tries to uncover the answers to questions surrounding her personal history. Cindy Kay is the voice of Jasmine as she struggles to keep her homelife stable; get her troubled, free-spirited mother to share her truth; and find a way to navigate a world she sees as a threat. Kay gives Jasmine a believable teenager's voice with a wide range of feelings. Jasmine pleads for help from the god Pangu, creator of the heavens and earth, whom her mother has always told her is her father. She is cleverly determined as she chases away the unsavory boyfriends her mother attracts. Her mother's feathery voice struggles to keep her secrets. A magical debut! *N.E.M.*

Sunlight
Playing
over a
Mountain
a novel
SELINA LI BI
NARRATED BY CINDY KAY
rb media

Recorded Books 8 hrs. Unabridged Ages 14+
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798895942956 $16.79
(also CD, MP3)

THE NOTORIOUS VIRTUES

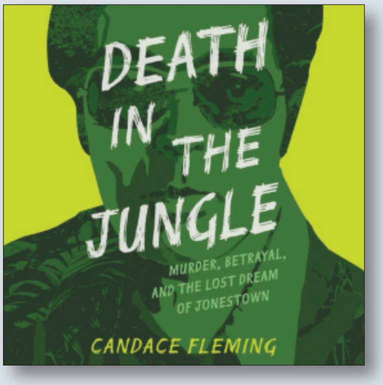
Alwyn Hamilton
Read by Max Meyers, Colin White, Karissa Vacker, EJ Lavery

Four narrators authentically convey the emotional weight of teenagers thrust into a dangerous magical competition that is part of a murder mystery. When the Holtzfall heiress is murdered, a sometimes deadly contest to determine the next heir begins. Karissa Vacker voices Nora, daughter of the murdered heiress. She and journalist August, voiced by Colin White, work to uncover the perpetrator. Theo, voiced by Max Meyers, lost his brother the night of the murder. And Lotte, voiced by EJ Lavery, only just learned her true identity as a Holtzfall, having been abandoned in a convent since birth. This ensemble portrays unique characters in interconnected chapters as each sifts through lies and secrets, tugging listeners along by their heartstrings. *A.K.R.*

Listening Library 14.75 hrs. Unabridged Ages 14+
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9780593162415 $27.50
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9780593162422 $75.00

DEATH IN THE JUNGLE: Murder, Betrayal, and the Lost Dream of Jonestown

Candace Fleming
Read by Karen Murray



Karen Murray's balanced narration fits this nonfiction account of Jim Jones and the tragedy at the Peoples Temple in Jonestown, Guyana, in 1978. Murray's tone reflects the author's research on the early religious zeal that fueled the imaginations of Jones's followers. Murray presents facts, people, and anecdotes, setting scenes as Jones nurtures followers' trust based on his belief in socialistic justice. Later, Murray's delivery of dialogue picks up emotion as the situation in the community becomes desperate with Jones's descent into drug use and brutality. This poignant audiobook, while never gratuitous, illuminates the tragic deaths of 909 Temple members. While it's an uncomfortable listen, the story is remarkable and haunting. *S.W.*

Listening Library 9.75 hrs. Unabridged Ages 12+
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217015160 $23.00
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217015177 $56.00

Remarkable and haunting.

MESSY PERFECT

Tanya Boteju
Read by Ariana Delawari

Ariana Delawari reflects the uncomfortable mix of feelings of Cassie Perera, which began with her betrayal of her best friend, Ben, in sixth grade, when the two were caught swapping outfits. She denies her friendship to avoid revealing her same-sex attractions, hiding behind being perfect at school, church, and home. Delawari carries listeners forward into Cassie's junior year, when Ben returns from years away at ballet school. Seeing him, Cassie's unresolved guilt returns, as does her desire for redemption. Cassie's decision to begin a Gender and Sexuality Alliance confronts years of secrets she's hidden from her Sri Lankan parents, her Catholic school, and her peers. Her life turns upside down until she faces and confesses truths that bring resolution. *S.W.*

Harper Audio 10.5 hrs. Unabridged Ages 12+
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9780063358539 $27.99

THE REBEL'S GUIDE TO PRIDE

Matthew Hubbard
Read by Michael Crouch

With a gentle Southern accent, Michael Crouch narrates this story about figuring out who you are. When the Pride celebration in Zeke's small town of Beggs, Alabama, is abruptly canceled, he finds himself organizing underground speakeasies. But this puts him at odds with his friends in his high school's Queer Straight Alliance, who feel like he's taking too many risks, and with his father, whose law firm is supporting the mayor's reelection campaign and "family first" agenda. Crouch communicates all of Zeke's confusion, anxiety, and hope as he wrestles with his dad's expectations, the kind of activism he wants to pursue, and the kind of person he wants to be—all while exchanging messages with a boy and maybe beginning a relationship that goes beyond hookups. *J.M.D.*

Listening Library 8.5 hrs. Unabridged Ages 12+
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217069736 $25.00
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217069743 $63.00

SOMADINA
Akwaeke Emezi
Read by Nene Nwoko, Akwaeke Emezi

Nene Nwoko narrates this story about a magical West African world where teens receive and navigate magical gifts and powers. Each teen generally gets one gift, and deviating from that norm frightens the village. Even being born a twin is considered outside acceptable norms. Listeners will be enchanted by Somadina as she searches for her missing twin, Jayaike, and learns to control her magnificent powers and multiple gifts. Nwoko brings an authentic Nigerian accent and a variety of voices to the characters and entices listeners through mystery, adventure, and magic, making the world created by Emezi even more special. The acknowledgments are narrated by the author. *C.F.*

Listening Library 9.75 hrs. Unabridged Ages 12+
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798217015122 $25.00
Library Ed.: ISBN 9798217015139 $63.00

ALL WE LOST WAS EVERYTHING
Sloan Harlow
Read by Ferdelle Capistrano, Steven Molony

Narrator Ferdelle Capistrano depicts the emotional turmoil of River Santos, who is coping with breaking up with her boyfriend; being abandoned by her mother; losing everything, including her father, in a fire; having $2 million donated to her by an unknown source; yearning for her gorgeous new co-worker, Logan; and having a general sense that something is not quite right. Capistrano keeps up the pace in this fast-moving thriller, navigating listeners through the many twists and turns. On occasion she slows the momentum for River and Logan's intervals of steamy romance. Steven Molony portrays Logan in periodic chapters in which he explains the true feelings behind his hot and cold responses to River. *S.W.*

Listening Library 10 hrs. Unabridged Ages 14+
Trade: ISBN 9798217071241 $25.00
Library Ed.: ISBN 9798217071258 $63.00

MORE REVIEWS

Exclusive Web-Only
Young Adult Reviews
audiofilemagazine.com

(S)KIN
Ibi Zoboi
Read by Bahni Turpin, Robin Miles

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR
IBI ZOBOI
SOME MAGIC IS MEANT TO BURN.
(S)KIN

Myths come to life through Bahni Turpin and Robin Miles's stellar narration of this young adult fantasy. Marisol and her mother left their home in the Caribbean to live in Brooklyn. Marisol hopes to leave their island traditions and her family's magic behind. Genevieve grew up listening to her white father's mythical stories from her unknown mother's homeland. When the teens' lives collide, both discover secrets that change their views of their worlds. It's no surprise that both Turpin and Miles are Golden Voice narrators. Their skills bring Genevieve's and Marisol's stories to life as they capture the teens' personalities. Miles exquisitely delivers Marisol's Caribbean accent, while Turpin channels Genevieve's frustrations with her family and her own health. Simply magical. *A.L.S.M.*

Harper Audio 6.25 hrs. Unabridged Ages 12+
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9780063395589 $21.99

Simply magical.

MYSTERY ROYALE
Kaitlyn Cavalancia
Read by James Babson, Emily O'Brien

Emily O'Brien voices 16-year-old Mullory Prudence and the other characters in this novel with a wide vocal range and quirky accents. James Babson's baritone pitches provide an abundance of variety for other characters, as well. Mullory is bombarded with multiple invitations to Stoutmire Estate to compete in a game of mystery royale for the chance to win a sizable inheritance. Although she originally tries to avoid the game, as her mother cautioned before disappearing, her curiosity and financial need win over. Upon engaging in the game with a handful of cousins, Mullory finds that she stands to gain not only financial security, but also considerable magical powers. Delightful and sensitive narrations by O'Brien and Babson bring the intrigue of this mystery to life. *C.F.*

MYSTERY ROYALE
KAITLYN CAVALANCIA

Disney Hyperion 12 hrs. Unabridged Ages 12+
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781368115384 $22.99

THE DUKE STEALS HEARTS & OTHER BODY PARTS
Elias Cold
Read by Em Grosland

Em Grosland voices trans con artist Phyllis as he uses his magic to steal people's body parts and hold them for ransom—all to satisfy his partner in crime, Lucent. But when one target, Wycliff, can't pay for his stolen nose due to his sister Adeline's disappearance, Phyllis disguises himself as a duke and infiltrates the nobility to find her. Grosland smoothly portrays a variety of characters' emotions, including Lucent's deep sadness, Phyllis's intrigue and growing feelings of love, Wycliff's anger and dread, and Adeline's passionate ferocity. Grosland's dramatic performance of the nobility is enthusiastically delivered, enhancing their privilege and ignorance. Phyllis's increasing comfort in his new skin as Lord Phillip is authentically portrayed. *A.K.R.*

Listening Library 9.25 hrs. Unabridged Ages 14+
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798217080427 $25.00
Library Ed.: ISBN 9798217080434 $63.00

Soundtrack

▶ ***AudioFile*'s Michele Cobb spoke with narrator Nile Bullock, producer Brian Ramcharan, and Penguin Random House Audio Senior Vice President of Content Production Dan Zitt for a conversation about Jason Reynolds's *Soundtrack*—an audiobook original about New York City teens whose talent and love of music lift them to unexpected heights. They discuss capturing the feel of New York City through sound, working with a full cast, and the incorporation of Justin Ellington's musical elements. This is an excerpt—hear their full conversation on a bonus episode of our Behind the Mic podcast.**

Members of the cast of *Soundtrack*

Michele Cobb: *Soundtrack* is actually a piece that Jason wrote years ago. So how did it come to be produced as an audio piece, and what is it about *Soundtrack* that makes it the perfect audio original?

Dan Zitt: Jason wrote this book about 10 years ago, and it was never published. And at PRH we're always looking for opportunities to do things with original audio. We don't do a lot of it, and we're very selective about what it is that we choose. But Jason's agent reached out to me and said, "Jason has something for you he'd like to run by you." And the minute I read it, I called Brian, and I said, "We gotta get this book, and we have to make this into an audio." It's the perfect book for audio, because it has all these opportunities to give you everything that you want as an audio producer. You want to create the soundscape of New York City? It's in there. You want to bring in a Grammy Award-winning composer to create music for this band? You can do that.

MC: Brian, tell us a little bit about the casting process. Because you recorded this as a full cast, it's got all these different characters in the band and so much richness to play against.

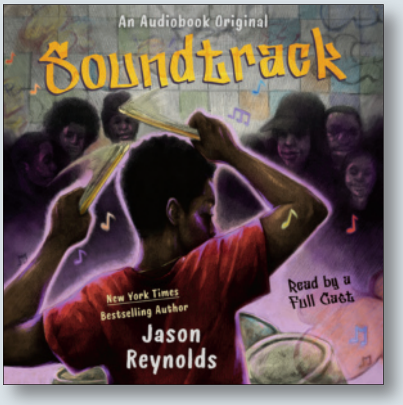
Brian Ramcharan: Jason writes all of his books with characters with such unique personalities and a lot of depth. Dan and I read the book, and we understood we needed to cast actors that could depict how unique each character was and depict the realness of young New Yorkers who are musicians. We did in-person auditions—our casting teams scoured everywhere for new actors, from New York City schools to talent agencies and our casting platform, Ahab Talent, and we ended up auditioning over a hundred people. And yeah, it was really important that these actors could get that New York City accent and slang down. And this was written in the early 2010s. It was one of the first books Jason ever wrote. So not only having a New York City accent, but folks that could put on that accent from 10 years ago, which was extremely different than it is now.

MC: Tell us a little bit about how the soundscape was developed, because there's a lot of music, but there's also other sounds as well.

BR: We wanted to make it as immersive an experience as we could and make listeners feel as if they were actually standing in New York City. I mean, I tell people I want people to smell the city as they're listening to this audiobook. So we tried to make it sound as authentic as New York City can, from authentic subway sounds, subway announcements from 10 years ago when Jason wrote the book, all the way down to how the knock sounds when you knock on a New York City apartment door, to street vendors, restaurants, every little detail. And the soundscape is way more than

(l to r) Producer Brian Ramcharan, author Jason Reynolds, producer Dan Zitt

SOUNDTRACK
Jason Reynolds
Read by Nile Bullock, Mekhi Hewling, Jade Williams, Brandon Miles, Ryan Vincent Anderson, Amir Royale, and a Full Cast



A full cast gives a wonderfully vibrant performance of Jason Reynolds's powerful story about found family and music. Nile Bullock heads up the ensemble as 18-year-old Stuyvesant (Stuy), an avid drummer. When he moves out because of his mom's new boyfriend, he meets Dunks, a genius on the guitar, and then Alexis (bass) and Keith (trumpet), all of whom love music just as much as Stuy does. They form a band, and their impromptu jam sessions in New York City subway stations quickly gather fans. The uniformly excellent performances make the characters feel real, developed, and relatable, and the lively conversations among teenagers sound absolutely authentic. Justin Ellington's extensive and essential musical score gives *Soundtrack* its soundtrack. The result is a production that's full of heart. *J.M.D.*

Listening Library 6.5 hrs. Audio Program Ages 14+
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9780593863466 $18.00

A production that's full of heart.

just the sound design. This book is written in a way where all of these musicians are improvisational musicians, so it's not like we could write a song per chapter and just add it into the audiobook afterwards. We hear these musicians actually writing their guitar parts or bass parts or drums or horns in real time. So we had to deliver a fully assembled VO track to Justin Ellington, our composer, and he sat down with a band and basically scored this like a movie. Dan and I actually recorded a tap dancer as well, because Stuy, the main character, references watching YouTube videos of Savion Glover and Gregory Hines and Sammy Davis.

MC: Nile, I want to know a little bit about your narration journey. How did you get into audiobooks?

Nile Bullock: Oh, man. It is kind of still crazy to me to this day how much the audiobook world has taken me in, and it has become such a pivotal role. I'm very fortunate to have been working as an actor as a child, but I didn't do my first audiobook until, I want to say around 2015, 2016. I worked on this really, really cool book called *The Stars Beneath Our Feet* by David Barclay Moore. And that was my first introduction to audiobooks, and it was kind of like a dive right in.

This has to be one of the most inspiring and of dopest books I've worked on so far in my career, just because how much culture is in the book. Also because of the fact that it's a multicast production, we were able to record this in person in studio with everybody in front of a microphone. It was really, really dope to be able to play with that. Everybody was so talented and just really happy to be there. And it also felt good. Being able to work with the cast that was predominantly Black, and everyone understood the culture of New York City and what it means to be in that time period of just bouncing around the subway or going to certain spots and hearing jazz at a certain spot, or then going and finding pop or R&B in another location. We all just understood that rhythm. So it literally felt like we were making music together in a sense.

DZ: I think what we saw in the studio, for me, it was like, this is the best audiobook experience I've ever had, just watching actors come together with this goal to create this really nice piece of art. And I think you hear it in the recording.

BR: I feel like Nile, Jade, Mekhi, Amir, and Brandon, you guys are all super close now, you guys are actually like a band.

NB: 100%. We all bonded so much over the recording process, and we all just got to pick each other's brains as well. I feel like it was an experience of a lifetime, being able to work with that type of rhythm. I feel like there's so much rhythm in Jason's work. I was honored to be able to be a part of this. ■

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audiofilemagazine.com/podcast

Neal Shusterman

ALL BETTER NOW: All Better Now, Book 1

Neal Shusterman
Read by Greg Tremblay, Neal Shusterman

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR
NEAL SHUSTERMAN
ALL BETTER NOW
READ BY GREG TREMBLAY AND THE AUTHOR

This gripping and thought-provoking audiobook will not only please fans of dystopian stories, especially the author's, but will also add new listeners to both groups. In a post-Covid world, Crown Royale, a new virus that is seen as life-ending—whether or not the sick recover—is spreading rapidly. All those who do recover experience enlightenment, losing any negative feelings they held before they were infected. The dramatic change causes some people to see the recovered as zombies. Greg Tremblay's and Neal Shusterman's narrations clearly convey the multiple characters, making it easy to follow their varied points of view toward the new enlightenment. *E.J.F.*

Simon & Schuster Audio 14 hrs. Unabridged Ages 14+
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781797161358 $29.99 (also CD)

Gripping and thought-provoking.

CHALLENGER DEEP
NEAL SHUSTERMAN
DRY
SCYTHE
NEAL SHUSTERMAN

More Listening

CHALLENGER DEEP
Neal Shusterman, read by Michael Curran-Dorsano
Harper Audio Unabridged Ages 14+
Trade Ed.: DD

DRY
Neal Shusterman, Jarrod Shusterman, read by Jenni Barber, Noah Galvin, Michael Crouch, Kivlighan de Montebello, Candace Baxter, Neal Shusterman, Jarrod Shusterman
Simon & Schuster Audio Unabridged Ages 12+
Trade Ed.: DD

ROXY
Neal Shusterman, Jarrod Shusterman, read by Michael Crouch, Megan Tusing, Shaun Taylor-Corbett, Candace Thaxton, Neal Shusterman
Simon & Schuster Audio Unabridged Ages 14+
Trade Ed.: DD

SCYTHE: Arc of a Scythe, Book 1
Neal Shusterman, read by Greg Tremblay
Audible, Inc. Unabridged Ages 14+
Trade Ed.: DD

Photo by Gaby Gerster

TRANS HISTORY:
From Ancient Times to Present Day

Alex L. Combs, Andrew Eakett
Read by Alex L. Combs, Andrew Eakett, and a Full Cast

Listening to this audiobook is like spending a few hours with your favorite teacher. Narrator Andrew Eakett is supported by a full cast who take listeners on a comprehensive journey through a history of trans identities. Eakett's narration is engaging, knowledgeable, and funny as he shares key terminology, historical examples, and compelling stories of people ranging from Roman emperors to the icons of the Stonewall Riots and to present-day figures from cultures around the world. The pacing and emotion of the entire cast keep listeners engaged throughout. Most valuable are the questions to consider at the end of each section. Each provides listeners with an important opportunity for reflection and activism. *K.S.M.*

Listening Library 3.5 hrs. Unabridged Ages 12+
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9780593414552 $15.00
Library Ed.: ISBN 9780593414569 $34.00

THE SUMMER I ATE THE RICH

Maika Moulite, Maritza Moulite
Read by Melinda Sewak, Mieko Gavia, Zuri Washington, Khaya Fraites, Fedna Jacquet, Ashley De La Rosa

Melinda Sewak primarily narrates this horror audiobook about a Haitian American teen whose zombie abilities are grounded in Haitian folklore. Brielle's mother suffers from chronic pain, and despite working for the billionaire family whose company makes the pain medication she needs, her health insurance doesn't cover it. Brielle's new internship gives her access to ultra-rich clients for her supper club, and no one can guess the revolting truth behind her delicious meals. Sewak's tender, sometimes sinister, delivery of food descriptions enhances the story's evocative language. Her narration smoothly transitions between Brielle's American accent and her mother's French Creole. Other narrators present as a cast, voicing Brielle's sisters as a Haitian chorus. *A.K.R.*

Macmillan Audio 10 hrs. Unabridged Ages 14+
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781250383310 $26.99
Library Ed.: ISBN 9781250419767 $79.99

RUN AWAY WITH ME

Brian Selznick
Read by Mark Sanderlin

Mark Sanderlin gives an outstanding performance of Selznick's new audiobook about two teens who are finding first love. Telling the story in the first person, Danny is wandering alone in Rome while his mother translates old manuscripts. He soon meets Rome native Angelo. Sanderlin captures their initial shyness, then deftly conveys the wonder felt by naïve Danny and the joy felt by worldly Angelo as he details each site in the city. Sanderlin ramps up tension as their affections grow and they discover an Italian couple from the past who experienced forbidden love. Danny's angst is palpable as his impending departure approaches—though Angelo proposes they run away. The detailed descriptions and the strong emotions in Sanderlin's delivery more than compensate for the audiobook's missing illustrations. *S.D.B.*

Scholastic Audio 5.75 hrs. Unabridged Ages 12+
Trade: ISBN 9781546151593 $20.99
Library Ed.: ISBN 9781546151630 $62.99

Mark Sanderlin gives an outstanding performance.

BEST OF ALL WORLDS

Kenneth Oppel
Read by Barrett Leddy

Barrett Leddy lends his youthful-sounding voice to this YA sci-fi set in the near future when the climate crisis and pandemics have worsened. Xavier Oaks reluctantly spends the night at the lake house with his father and his pregnant stepmom. When he wakes up, he finds their cabin has been transplanted to a farm inside a dome. Three years later, another family arrives, raising Xavier's hopes of escape. Leddy's performance at the beginning carries the exuberance of a preteen Boy Scout. For the rest of the story, Leddy's narration reflects the deeper and slightly more experienced voice of the teenaged Xavier. Leddy forgoes the Oak family's French-Canadian accent but slips easily into the Jackson family's Southern drawl. *S.S.*

Scholastic Audiobooks 9 hrs. Unabridged Ages 12+
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781546177548 $24.99
Library Ed.: ISBN 9781546177555 $74.99

AMELIA, IF ONLY

Becky Albertalli
Read by Caitlin Kinnunen

Join spirited narrator Caitlin Kinnunen for a coming-of-age story filled with quirky adventures. Amelia is panicking after asking her celebrity crush, famous YouTuber Walter Holland, to her prom online. Then she takes her dream a step further and plans a road trip with friends to see him in person. Surely, he'll then notice her, and her romantic fantasies will come true! Kinnunen is an excellent voice for Amelia, a Jewish teenager with a big personality who is fiercely protective of her friends. Kinnunen's robust performance fits this rambunctious group of teen girls who are bonding on the road. And on the way, Amelia just might discover a love she's had all along. A sweet, fun listen. *G.M.*

Harper Audio 8 hrs. Unabridged Ages 14+
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9780063045958 $27.99

THE TROUBLE WITH SECRETS
Naomi Milliner
Read by Dara Rosenberg

Dara Rosenberg excels at narrating this emotional audiobook, which begins as seventh-grader Becky is dressing for her older sister Sara's funeral. Rosenberg leads listeners from the sad "Now" chapter to the lighter "Before" chapters, when Becky secretly "borrows" her mother's credit card to get her beloved older brother a gift. The theme of secrets is introduced against the backdrop of a loving Jewish family, and Rosenberg warmly invites listeners into their traditions. Tension mounts as Sara fears her father's disapproval and hides the fact that she's dating a non-Jew, a deadly mistake. Past and present meet with Sara's death and the grief that consumes the family before they right themselves by revealing truths and tenderness. *S.W.*

Harper Audio 7.5 hrs. Unabridged Ages 8+
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9780063311671 $21.99

THE GATE, THE GIRL, AND THE DRAGON
Grace Lin
Read by Mesmi Chu, Grace Lin

GRACE LIN
THE GATE, THE GIRL, AND THE DRAGON

Mesmi Chu narrates this fantasy infused with Chinese folktales. A lion couple and their cub, Jin, guard the Old City Gate, the entry to their unseen world of stone spirits, or Gongshi, who protect the modern city's residents. Jin shirks that responsibility; he resents his father's devotion to duty and the Sacred Sphere that binds their worlds. Chu highlights Jin's selfishness with youthful whininess. When Jin is locked out of the magical gate, he finds Lulu, an ethereal girl whom Chu portrays with soft-spoken kindness. They must unlock the gate and the interwoven stories of a sighing bell, a dragon, and a sculptor. Chu keeps the story flowing with a variety of voices for the city residents, Gongshi, and dragons. *L.T.*

Hachette Audio 7.5 hrs. Unabridged Ages 8+
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781668649138 $24.99

MAX IN THE LAND OF LIES: A Tale of World War II
Adam Gidwitz
Read by Euan Morton

Euan Morton, who narrated the first book in this duology, concludes it with the strength it deserves. Story and narration find new depth as 13-year-old Max, a German Jew trained by British spies, returns to Berlin amid the horrors of the Nazi regime. His official mission? Infiltrate the heart of radio propaganda. His personal mission? Find his parents. Morton's narration has an almost visual quality. One can see the snide, smug smiles of German officers; the despairing heartbreak of a gay man recalling his past; and the impishness of two teasing spirits who perch on Max's shoulders, informing and guiding him. Pacing is remarkable, varying quickly from Max's scary spying to the jibing of his invisible companions. Morton's depictions are flawless and his tones on target. The story's well-woven themes are elegantly rendered. *S.W.*

Listening Library 9 hrs. Unabridged Ages 8+
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9798217019038 $25.00
Library Ed.: ISBN 9798217019045 $56.00

> *"There were many tears as I navigated Beatrix's journey; her heart captured me entirely, and I truly believe verse was the only way it could have been written."*
> —Narrator Erin Moon

Photo by Perlla Faschoway Photography

PLEASE PAY ATTENTION
Jamie Sumner
Read by Erin Moon

author of Roll with It
JAMIE SUMNER
PLEASE PAY ATTENTION
READ BY ERIN MOON

It's impossible to hear Erin Moon's delivery of this affecting story without experiencing the same emotions as its first-person protagonist. Bea is a middle-grade student in a small school who has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair. When a shooter enters the building, she becomes tragically aware of her disadvantaged situation. This novel in verse recounts in present tense the events before, during, and after the shooting. Moon creates a thoroughly likable Bea. Initially, her voice bubbles with the optimism and playful sarcasm of a typical kid. However, her panicked emotions during the shooting are palpable. Listeners will feel helplessness, panic, and dread in Moon's breathless, halting delivery. Afterward, Bea becomes more reticent until loved ones and a therapy horse help her recover and find new strength. *L.T.*

Simon & Schuster Audio 3 hrs. Unabridged Ages 10+
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781668128978 $14.99

THE SECRETS OF LOVELACE ACADEMY
Marie Benedict, Courtney Sheinmel
Read by Billie Fulford-Brown

Benedict and Sheinmel's YA historical fiction, set in the early 1900s, introduces 12-year-old orphan Lainey Phillips. Billie Fulford-Brown gives Lainey a believable voice as she struggles to grow and learn at the harsh Sycamore Home for Orphaned Children. Mrs. Holsapple's cruelty and disdain for her orphans come through in every syllable she spits out, in contrast to the oily charm she spouts to possible benefactors. Lainey's chance encounter with a woman at the orphanage's open house leads to a scholarship to Lovelace Academy. There, her roommate Marjorie's voice is condescending, while Sabrina's tone offers friendship. Lainey's confidence grows when a Lovelace mission sends her to Switzerland, where she wins over suspicious Mileva Maric Einstein, Albert's real-life wife, a physicist/mathematician who contributed to his ideas. *N.E.M.*

Simon & Schuster Audio   6 hrs.   Unabridged   Ages 8+
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781668129944 $19.99

A DAY AT THE BEACH
Gary D. Schmidt, Ron Koertge
Read by Ramón de Ocampo, Victoria Villareal

Ramón de Ocampo and Victoria Villareal throw themselves into the portrayal of two dozen kids and a couple of dogs, who are spending the day at a New Jersey beach. First, we hear the voices of siblings Jackie and Simon as they run on the empty beach. Later, the beach becomes crowded with people of varied classes and ethnicities. De Ocampo portrays a Cuban teen idol who is trying to avoid being recognized and another character named Octavio, who loses his swimming trunks in the surf. Villareal is Carla, who organizes a "circus" on the beach. Also part of the story are a flash mob, a father yelling at his kid, and a lost dog who talks. The narrators are equal to it all. *A.B.*

Harper Audio   4 hrs.   Unabridged   Ages 8+
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9780063380950 $18.99

MORE REVIEWS

Exclusive Web-Only
Children & Family Reviews

REBELLION 1776
Laurie Halse Anderson
Read by Phoebe Strole

REBELLION 1776
LAURIE HALSE ANDERSON

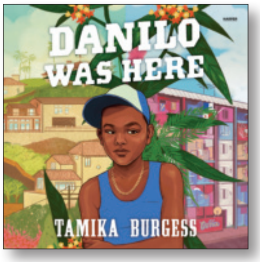
Listeners are presented with the roiling and realistic emotions of 13-year-old Elspeth Culpepper, who finds herself in the middle of the 1776 Siege of Boston. Narrator Phoebe Strole does a masterful job presenting the characters and their difficulties—from Elspeth's Loyalist master, who is forced to leave Boston, to the various members of the family for whom she becomes a housemaid afterward. The narrative, which Elspeth tells directly to listeners, incorporates historical quotes and relatable events, such as Boston's becoming an inoculation center against a raging smallpox epidemic, at the time an unpleasant, potentially dangerous process. Strole provides voices that reflect the characters' ages, genders, and emotions in the dangerous times that provide an entrancing story about the Revolutionary War. *E.J.F.*

Listening Library   10 hrs.   Unabridged   Ages 10+
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9780593915059 $25.00
Library Ed.: ISBN 9780593915066 $50.00

> *Strole does a masterful job presenting the characters and their difficulties.*

DANILO WAS HERE
Tamika Burgess
Read by Timothy Andrés Pabon

Timothy Andrés Pabon narrates the story of Danilo with heartfelt emotions. In 1989, in the wake of the U.S. military invasion of Panama, Danilo's neighborhood, El Chorillo, is destroyed. Recently abandoned by his father, Danilo tries to be strong for his mother and sister. When a baseball recruiter offers him a scholarship to play in California, Danilo is torn between his bright future and not leaving his mom and sister. Also, his recent struggles have dampened his enthusiasm for baseball; can he find joy in the sport again? Pabon narrates with an accent that adds charm and authenticity to the character of Danilo. He successfully infuses his performance with the deep emotions and wonder Danilo feels as he navigates new experiences and challenges. *A.M.*



Harper Audio   7.25 hrs.   Unabridged   Ages 8+
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9780063159693 $27.99

THE TROUBLE WITH HEROES
Kate Messner
Read by Mack Gordon

Mack Gordon embraces the anger and frustration of seventh-grader Finn, whose father, a 9/11 hero, died during the Covid pandemic. Gordon reserves especially intense sarcasm for Finn's overdue poetry assignments and his attitude toward the reparation he must perform for vandalizing a notable hiking trail: In one summer he must hike 46 Adirondack High Peaks. Gordon's narration captures the many poetic and visual elements of the text, along with the accompanying photographs. He makes sure his tone communicates the changes in Finn's attitude, which ranges from sulkiness to vulnerability and grief, and finally to memories of his father and a recognition of his own connection to nature. *S.W.*

Bloomsbury Publishing   4.25 hrs.   Unabridged   Ages 8+
Trade Ed.: ISBN 9781547616411 $13.08

By Cynthia Leitich Smith
Cover illustrated by Kate Gardiner
Heartdrum
FIREFLY SEASON

FIREFLY SEASON
Cynthia Leitich Smith
Read by Katie Anvil Rich

Katie Anvil Rich brings her joyful narration to this children's book about two girls from different backgrounds who form a close bond. Each summer, 7-year-old Native American Piper goes to visit her cousins on their tribal land. Once back home, she forms a friendship with her new Indian neighbor, Sumi, who is 4. The two grow close over the next year, so when Piper learns her family is moving away, both girls are saddened. How they resolve this issue will warm listeners' hearts. Rich gives the two girls youthful voices. Listeners will revel in their friendship and rejoice in their solution to living farther apart. Rich knows how to bring out the depth of childhood feelings. *L.M.G.*

Harper Audio 7 mins. Unabridged Ages 4-6
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9780063439245 $2.99

DON'T TRUST FISH
Neil Sharpson
Read by Neil Sharpson

Author Neil Sharpson narrates his first picture book, an apparent nonfiction work about animal classes. There's a curious undercurrent of edginess that Sharpson strengthens into a predominant tone with the repeated refrain: "Don't trust fish." Not only do fish defy categorization, they eat "poor innocent crabs who are just trying to have a nice time in the sea." This is only one of the clues to the identity of the unidentified storyteller. Fabulous detours allow Sharpson to deliver pirate speak, fishy baby talk, ferocious and funny conspiracy theories, and storytelling that fills in for Dan Santat's illustrations. Sharpson's audio clues are subtle, silly, and sure to suck in listeners. The production has a second story for listeners who are turning pages with their "weird fleshy human fingers." *S.W.*

Listening Library 15 mins. Unabridged Ages 4-6
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217171248 $5.00
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217171286 $22.00

CINCINNATI LEE, CURSE BREAKER
Heidi Heilig
Read by Katharine Chin

Katharine Chin skillfully narrates this middle-grade adventure, capturing all the characters' voices. Natalie "Cincinnati" Lee has stolen her grandfather's 135-year-old diary, which contains details of all the treasures he has taken. In an effort to break the family curse, Cincinnati is determined to repatriate the relics mentioned in the diary. As she grapples with the first one, she is swept up into the mystery of another, the Spear of Destiny. The intrigue puts Cincinnati and her two friends in danger as they embark on their quest to Paris. Chin excels with accents and pitch changes that reflect the different ages, genders, and ethnicities of the characters. Her tone and pacing are also expertly adjusted as the suspense intensifies. *S.K.G.*

Harper Audio 6.75 hrs. Unabridged Ages 8+
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9780063348424 $21.99

RETURN to SENDER
a novel by Vera Brosgol

RETURN TO SENDER
Vera Brosgol
Read by Michelle H. Lee

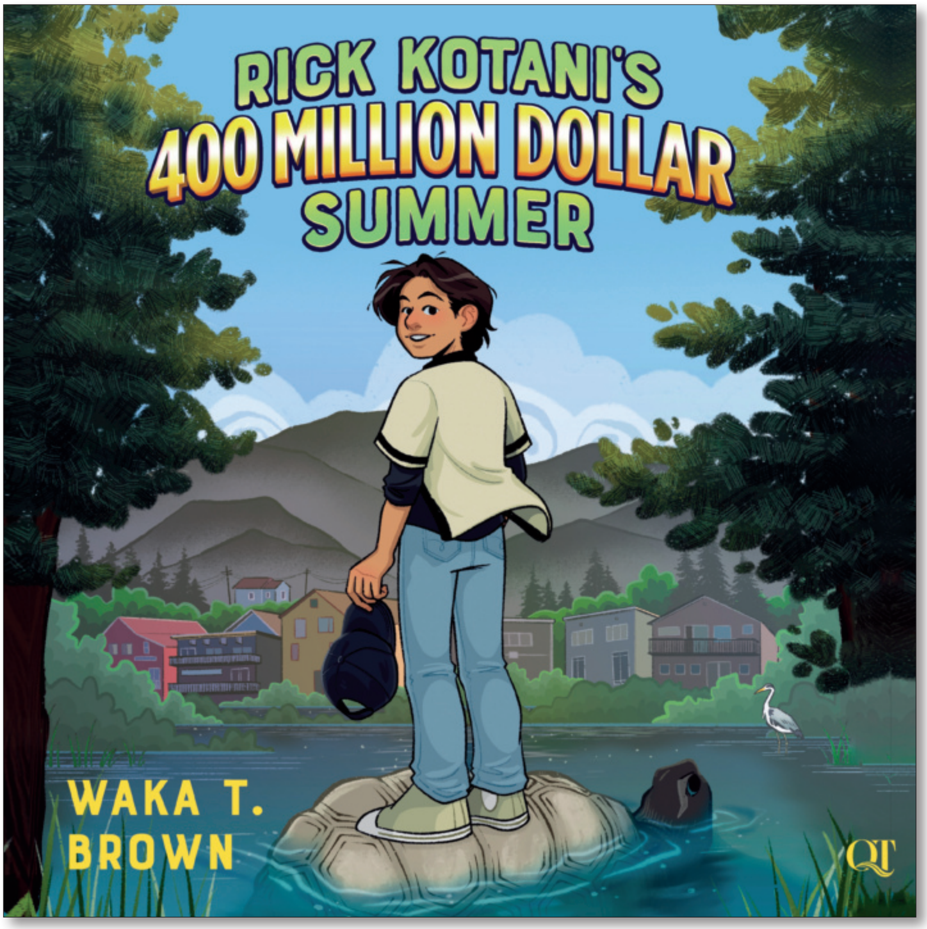
Young listeners are in for a treat with this story of a grieving boy who moves with his recently widowed mom into a seventh-floor New York City walk-up with a magical wish-granting mail slot. In short order Oliver is wishing for ever-pricier consumer goods to impress the kids at the snobby private school he attends on scholarship, thanks to his mom's job as a custodian there. But these wishes come with consequences. Narrator Michelle H. Lee effectively balances Oliver's interiority with the zany mayhem his wishes wreak on the world around him. In the dialogue she creates a fully realized cast of kids and adults, giving Oliver's poor-little-rich-girl friend, Colette, special nuance. This audiobook explores heavy themes with a light touch. *V.S.*

Macmillan Audio 6 hrs. Unabridged Ages 8+
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781250395726 $19.99

RICK KOTANI'S 400 MILLION DOLLAR SUMMER
Waka T. Brown
Read by Eric Yang

Eric Yang's spirited performance and ease in creating multiple characters make this audiobook a joy to listen to. Californian Rick Kotani, who loves baseball, expected to spend the summer pitching for his team. Instead, he winds up in Oregon with his mom, who's looking after his Japanese grandfather, who still has spunk but isn't safe living independently. As Rick's Grandpa Hiroshi introduces him to a Japanese folktale that mirrors his life as a young man, Yang adopts an accent that perfectly fits an immigrant who has spent decades in America. Rick's growing interest in Toni, an excellent ballplayer and umpire who is continually being sidelined in favor of her twin brother, sounds both charming and squirmy. The minor characters are excellent, too—the overenthusiastic administrator at a dreary nursing home is particularly entertaining. *A.B.*

Harper Audio 6 hrs. Unabridged Ages 8+
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9780063230842 $27.00



HOW TO SURVIVE ON THE MOON: Lunar Lessons from a Rocket Scientist
Joalda Morancy
Read by Melinda Sewak

As this dynamic guide to space exploration begins, narrator Melinda Sewak blasts off with a brief history of astronauts around the world and their contributions. Overall, this audiobook encourages listeners to consider what life might be like on the moon. Sewak's enthusiastic narration is paired with instrumental music that changes to match the topic under discussion; a variety of fun sound effects mimic the illustrations and graphic novel elements of the print version. Listeners will be fascinated by the mix of science and educated speculation on how people in the future could build lunar cities and send supplies back and forth to Earth via magnetic catapults or space elevators. *N.M.*

Macmillan Audio 1 hr. Unabridged Ages 8+
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9781250386878 $1.99

A HOME FOR UNUSUAL MONSTERS: The Kairos Files, Book 2
Shaun David Hutchinson
Read by Elena Rey

Elena Rey ably voices a bustling cast of humans and monsters in this sequel to *The School for Invisible Boys*. Here, 12-year-old Kairos agent Sam Osborne takes center stage when he's assigned to find the papers of a deceased operative. Embedding in Seattle with his family, Sam assumes the identity of a Texas cousin, a device that allows Rey to slip nimbly between accents. She's particularly adept with her characterizations of children, especially Sam's target's earnest grandson, his word-loving best friend, and the teenage son of the family next door—none of whom are what they seem. Author Hutchinson opens his aperture considerably in this second series outing, but he provides enough backstory to orient new listeners as Rey confidently carries them forward. *V.S.*

Listening Library 7.25 hrs. Unabridged Ages 8+
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217015627 $20.00
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9798217015634 $50.00

ON THE BLOCK: Stories of Home
Ellen Oh [Ed.]
Read by Yasmin Mwanza, Eli Schiff, Ulka Simone Mohanty, et al.

A full cast performs this love letter to home, family, and the power of connection. Over the course of 12 linked stories, each performed by a different narrator, listeners meet the young people who inhabit The Entrada, an apartment building that has been home to countless immigrants who have come to the U.S. seeking to build better lives. From shy Lila, just arrived from Trinidad and longing for familiar comforts, to confident Ro, who wants to honor her Chinese heritage in her own unique way, and to thoughtful Alex, who reaches out to a cantankerous neighbor via food, these kids are complex and realistically portrayed. Each narrator takes care to fully inhabit the personality and cultural background of their character, and it's especially fun to hear the previous stories intertwine with new ones. *N.M.*

Listening Library 5 hrs. Unabridged Ages 8+
Trade Ed.: DD ISBN 9780593916001 $15.00
Library Ed.: DD ISBN 9780593916018 $38.00

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Audiobooks and Literacy

Spending 44 Hours with Mark Twain

By Alan Minskoff

The audiobook of Ron Chernow's *Mark Twain*, read by Jason Culp, runs 44 hours (see our review on page 49). Reviewer Alan Minskoff shares his very personal guide to listening to a 44-hour-long audiobook over the course of two intense weeks—and provides inspiration for fitting more audiobook listening into our lives.

Garden

First, I traveled to my local garden center and brought home fertilizer, seeds, and plants. Then I visited the farmers' market. It is best if it is spring when you yearn to get outside and garden. Taking in the final three hours, I planted tomatoes, seeds of all sorts, peppers (it is Twain, after all), and cucumbers.

Dogs

I added extra time to my walks with my flat-coated retrievers along the river and in the neighborhood. I am convinced that Marnie and Maxie sense when I am engrossed in an audiobook. As Twain went on his round-the-world speaking tour, the girls and I walked on the Greenbelt by the Boise River.

Groceries

Food stores, especially the big boxes, allow for continued listening. Twain would surely have been amused at half a dozen varieties of Cheerios.

Commuting

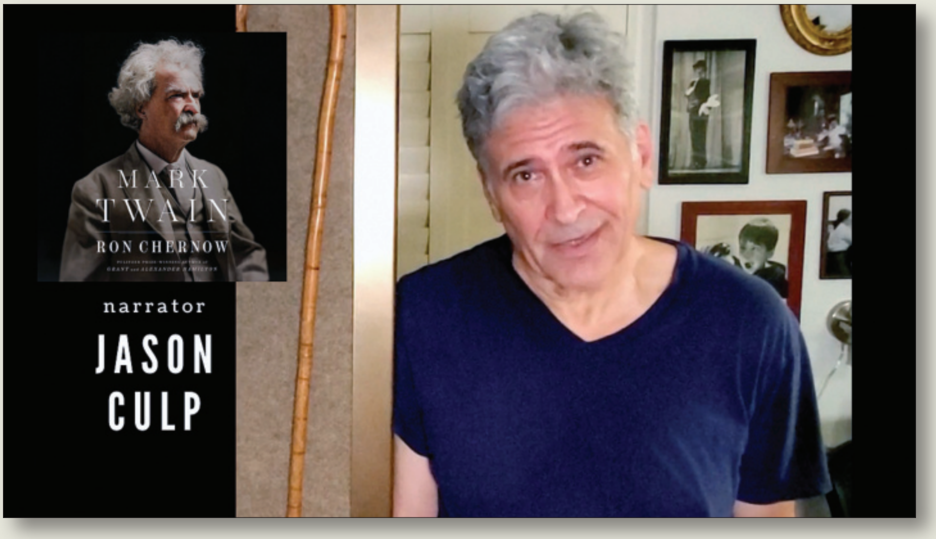
I live about 40 minutes from work, and I was riveted by Twain's bizarre business adventures and more bizarre "angelfish" (young girls from 10 to 16) that he chastely got to know as I drove back and forth. Often I'd add stops on the way home.

Email

Does anyone really need to concentrate while deleting the excess of excess when you can be learning about Twain's family woes?

Sports

Here is a generalizable trick: Turn the sound off and Ron Chernow and Jason Culp on. A sports lover, I live in a state and city without pro teams, so I mutely watch games of the teams of my boyhood (the Mets with Twain and the Mississippi). So, while Sam Clemens is living his best life in Florence, Vienna, London, or Hartford, I am watching the adventures and misadventures of Major League Baseball.



Reviewer Alan Minskoff with his dogs

Laundry

I find a kind of zen in doing mine. (Ditto for food prep.) And with Twain's cigar-smoking (sometimes forty in a day), washed clothes felt that much cleaner.

Walking

On campus, to lunch, around downtown, all while Twain fumed at doctors, lawyers, and publishers, I got steps in.

The River

My city, Boise, has a river running through it that I live alongside. With or without dogs, it reveals wonders. On my final Twain day, I watched a great blue heron devour a ten-inch trout in two clamps and a gulp. To hear Twain tell it, thinking or traveling on the river is a patriotic act.

Bonus

Jason Culp does the Twain twang masterfully, and Chernow is a biographer's biographer.

VIDEO ONLINE

Watch Jason Culp talking about narrating *Mark Twain* on AudioFile's YouTube channel: youtube.com/@audiofilemagazine

Alan Minskoff photo by Diane Ronayne

M.F.

M.S.

N.M.

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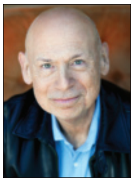
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Listening With . . .

Adriana Trigiani
Author
New York, New York

▶ Author Adriana Trigiani admits that she often finds herself swooning when she listens to audiobooks—and she thinks that listeners will swoon when they hear her latest novel, *The View from Lake Como*, as narrated by Academy Award-winning actress Mira Sorvino. "She brings the breadth of experience to everything she does. And in the audio realm, I think this is really important because you can feel it coming through your headset when you're listening—the excitement that the actor has or the passion that the actor has for the work. They're taking on every character in the book, the breadth and the expanse of all these characters." Audiobooks are great companions, Trigiani says, "but it's rare that you get to spend nine hours with Mira Sorvino and that great talent that she has."
—Josephine Reed

> *"Audiobooks are wonderful companions."*

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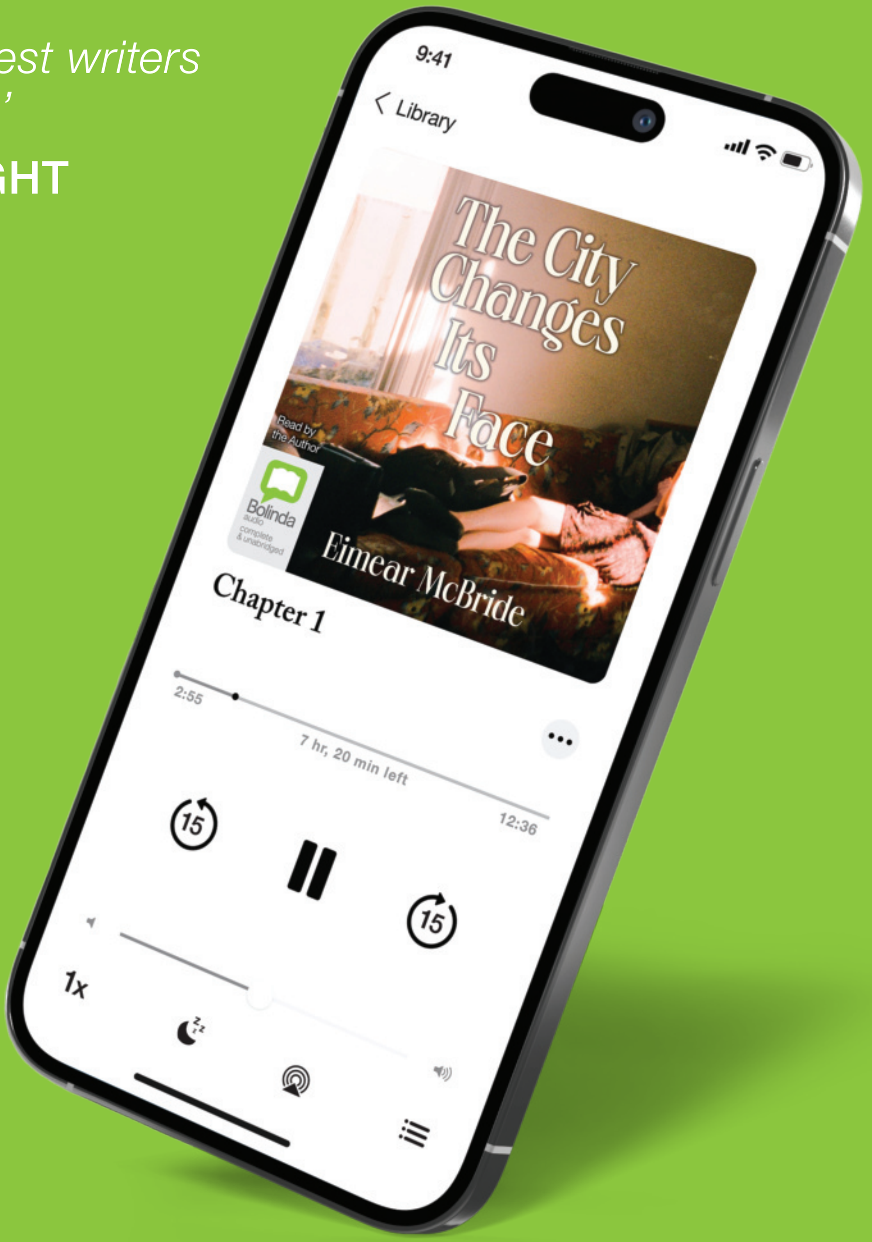
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